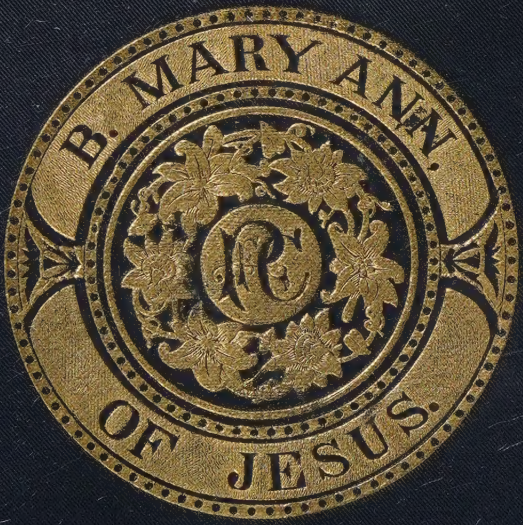
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The Saints and Servants of God.

THE LIFE

OF THE BLESSED

MARY ANN OF JESUS,

DE PAREDES Y FLORES,

AN AMERICAN VIRGIN

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BY FATHER JOSEPH BOERO, S. J.

PHILADELPHIA:
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1882.

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The life of the Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus, de Paredes, now first translated into English is cordially recommended to the perusal of the faithful. It is another glorious testimony to the beauty, truth and holiness of our religion—another strong inducement to cultivate devotion towards the saints of God, and to seek their aid in working out our salvation.

JOHN N. NEUMANN,
Bishop of Philadelphia.

Aug. 29, 1855.

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by
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A. M. D. G.

TO THE LADIES OF ST. ROSE'S SODALITY ATTACHED TO ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

AWARE of your distinguished piety, I think myself justified in presenting to your Sacred Association a translation of the life of the Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus, lately raised to the honours of the altar by his Holiness Pope Pius IX. But when I reflect also that the Blessed Rose of Lima is one of your principal patronesses, I consider myself bound to offer to your veneration another flower of South America, her near relative, the Lily of Quito.

Accept, therefore, this tribute of my sincere regard for you, and emulate the virtues of which she was so distinguished a model.

A. L. M.

Feast of St. Aloysius, 1855.

PREFACE.

To an age so corrupt and vitiated as the present, so fascinated with the pleasures, the delights and ease of the present life, and on that account an enemy of the cross of Christ and Christian penance, the life of the Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus de Paredes, lately raised to the honours of the altar by the Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX., cannot be an acceptable or an agreeable offering.

Born of a noble family and enriched with all those qualities and prerogatives which young ladies of the world so highly prize, and which they are so fond of displaying, she began from her tender years to entertain a contempt of herself, and to despise whatever the world loves and embraces; afterwards to mortify her passions and macerate her innocent flesh, making use of a thousand strategems and ingenious inventions in her penitential course. If the facts, which are recorded, had not been juridically deposed in the different processes by a great number of eye-witnesses and persons who could be relied upon, we should scarcely be able to persuade ourselves that a little girl of a few

years, of a delicate constitution, and living in the midst of the world, would have had the courage to undergo such an enormous amount of rigid austerities, the recital of which alone makes the blood creep and shudder in our veins. And what still more increases the wonder is that she had done nothing which deserved chastisement, having carried her virginal purity unspotted, and her baptismal innocence untarnished to the grave. To say much in a few words, she was the counterpart of St. Aloysius de Gonzaga, whose virtues she copied and whose example she imitated, but whom she surpassed in the rigour of her extraordinary penances, dying also like him in the flower of her age, in her twenty-sixth year.

The world, engrossed with the things of the earth, far from admiring and extolling such virtue, abominates and despises it, or at least regards it as obsolete and antiquated, and unsuited to the carnal refinement of the age. Many also even of the professed followers of Christ will stare when they view such perfection and become disheartened, and despairing of ever reaching such an eminence, they will remain in their tepidity without advancing a step.

God, however, has his own ends in view in proposing to us these sublime and heroic examples of sanctity. In the first place he wishes to make us see the power of his grace, which not only renders possible but easy and agreeable whatever is contrary to the weakness of nature. In the second place he intends to rouse the sinner, to call him to penance, and conduct him to the observance of the divine precepts, setting before him certain privileged souls, enabled by him to suffer great things, even beyond what is needful and what he himself commands. Finally, he gives vigour and alacrity to fervent Christians, in order that they may emulate the generous sacrifices of his dearer and more faithful servants, if not entirely at least partially.

Such I hope will be the fruit which the well-disposed faithful will reap from the perusal of this life. And what gives me confidence is the lively instances of many to have a second edition; the first, which was issued on the occasion of the solemn beatification, having been almost entirely exhausted. Thanks to God, I know that it has been read with admiration and pleasure, and that in several souls it has produced the salutary effects of a change of life, and an increase in

fervour. This is a sign that faith is not entirely extinct in the hearts of Christians, and that the actions of the just, although arduous and sublime, are strong inducements to virtue.

It was my intention to have re-published the same history which had been distributed at the time of the beatification, and written with no ordinary simplicity and elegance by the pious priest D. Giovanni del Castiglio, after having put it, however, in somewhat better order, and curtailed the frequent repetition, which must have been tiresome to the reader. But when I had set about the work and made some progress, I found that in place of digesting it into a better order, I had composed almost a new work. Wherefore I no longer closely followed the above writer, but sought to add several facts which I had read in the process, that had been omitted by the other, and which were well worthy of being knowu.

Whatever may have been my success in this labour, I shall consider myself as sufficiently rewarded, and shall be perfectly satisfied, if it redound in any measure to the glory of the Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus, and to the spiritual advantage of souls.

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LIFE

OF THE BLESSED

MARY ANN OF JESUS,

DE PAREDES Y FLORES.

CHAPTER I.

RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE SANCTITY OF ST. ROSE OF LIMA AND THE BLESSED MARY ANN OF JESUS. WONDERFUL THINGS THAT TOOK PLACE BEFORE AND AFTER THE BIRTH OF MARY ANN. EXTRAORDINARY EXAMPLES OF ABSTINENCE AND CHARITY GIVEN IN HER CHILDHOOD.

FOR the purpose of manifesting the force of his divine grace and to enliven the fervor of faith among the inhabitants of South America, whether natives or strangers who came there from Europe, or for the benefit of those who had lately passed from idolatry to the Catholic Religion, it pleased Almighty God at the commencement of the seventeenth century to place before the world two renowned examples of extraordinary perfection and holiness. And that they might have the greater efficacy to per-

suade and move, he selected two virgins, feeble with respect to sex, of a tender age and of very weak constitutions. These were Rose of St. Mary and Mary Ann of Jesus; the one born in Lima and the other in Quito. Both having been distinguished from their very infancy with the clearest evidences of the divine predilection, the first received the name of *Rose*, because she was scarcely born, when the figure and color of her face in the cradle seemed in some measure to resemble a beautiful rose; the second was called the Lily, from the fact that a most odoriferous lily sprung from her blood which continued for a long time without any sign of corruption. Both of them lived in the world, and after the example of St. Catherine of Sienna, whom they both proposed to imitate, bound themselves to God by the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, and found their retreat and solitute within the walls of their paternal homes. They afflicted and macerated their bodies in so many different and unusual ways, by penances the most extraordinary, that in this they are more worthy of admiration than imitation. Both were virgins of angelic purity, both preserved their baptismal innocence

to their last breath, reached in a short time the highest point of perfection and died in the flower of their age, Rose in her 31st and Mary Ann in her 26th year. I will say moreover, that if the ancient traditions do not deceive us, both had their origin from the same stock of the family of Flores, whose surname both bore, and hence they were related to each other by ties of blood and a common descent from the same ancestors. Because there is a current report, that three brothers by the name of Flores from the city of Toledo crossed over to America from New Spain, and that one of them settled in Cuzco, another in Lima and a third who was Don Girolamo Flores de Paredes, father of Mary Ann and perhaps the youngest of the three, in Quito. Be this as it may, it is certain that Mary Ann bore a most striking likeness to Rose in her manner of life and her admirable sanctity; and it would seem that God wished to perpetuate in her, if the expression be allowed, the copy of the other, for the latter was born not more than a year after the death of the former. Of all which things the reader will be better able to judge from the facts, which will be related in this history of her wonderful life, which

with the divine assistance I have undertaken to write.

Mary Ann the subject of our memoir was born in the city of Quito on the 31st of October in the year of our Lord 1618, of Don Girolamo Flores Zenel de Paredes, a nobleman of Toledo and D. Marianna Cranobles di Xaramilo, a descendent also of one of the most illustrious Spanish families of that Kingdom. To the nobility of blood which they inherited from their ancestors, her parents united so much devotion and Christian piety, that they were a mirror and a model to their fellow citizens, who were accustomed to call the house of Paredes by no other name than *the house of prayer, and the house of saints.* Seven children, three boys and four girls were already the fruit of their holy marriage, when D. Marianna already somewhat advanced in years, perceiving herself again pregnant, was troubled with much anguish and anxiety, believing that her near confinement would prove fatal to her. But she soon had reason to lay aside all fear. A little before the middle of the night of the 31st of October being seized with the pains of labor and in great suffering, one of the servants o

the house went out into the open air, and raising her eyes to heaven as if about to recommend her mistress to God, saw a most beautiful palm formed of the brightest stars, the trunk of which seemed to rest directly over the room where the sick woman lay. Not being able from stupor to articulate a single word, by signs and gestures she called the domestics, who ran immediately to her and among them came the father D. Girolamo. All plainly saw it with their eyes, and some who survived, testified in the juridical process to this unusual and marvellous sign given by Almighty God at the birth of this beloved little child. At that very moment D. Marianna was happily delivered, and at the same time that wonderful group of stars grew dim and disappeared.

The child just born appeared so amiable and so dear on account of its beautiful features, that it attracted the eyes and hearts of all that were present. D. Girolama her eldest sister took it up in her arms, and moved by feelings of mingled delight and piety exclaimed, Alas! O beautiful and charming infant, what have you come to do in this miserable world! God knows how many dangers, and what misery your

beauty will bring upon you! But in this she was certainly mistaken; and had afterwards more than any other, cause to admire the consummate sanctity of her sister. The next day, which was the solemnity of all saints, they wished to have the child immediately baptized; but all things not being yet prepared as the father D. Girolamo wished them, it was deferred to the 22d of November, a day sacred to the annual commemoration of St. Cecilia virgin and martyr. Her relative D. Gabriele Melendes Granobles stood sponsor at the sacred font, and to please the mother they gave her the name of Mary Ann.

God having now taken possession of this soul, filled it with the treasures of his grace, and from that moment began to prepare her for that lofty perfection in a wonderful manner, to which from all eternity he had destined her. Two things and both of them really astonishing are related of Mary Ann's infancy; and precisely regard those two singular virtues, innocence and penance, which she afterwards cultivated, as we will see, with so much care during the whole course of her life. D. Tommeso de Paredes, brother of the saint, deposed in the ju-

ridical process, that the mother wishing to apply the child to her breast to suckle it, the child at other times the most quiet and docile of creatures indignantly refused to take any nourishment. It passed therefore the whole of the first day after its birth fasting, and only towards evening it took some refreshment by applying once to the mother's breast, and then it would taste no more till the middle of the next day. The very same thing happened two or three times in succession; nor could the mother with all her endeavors ever induce the dear little babe to take nourishment more than twice a day and at determinate hours, viz. towards mid-day and about midnight. Therefore suspecting that her own milk was tainted from some cause, and that this made it disgusting to her daughter, she consigned her to the nurse. But it was all to no purpose; for the child persevered in its own way; and is was observed moreover that on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays of every week it commenced and always continued to take nourishment but once and that at mi l-day. Then at last they perceived that it was not an effect of the badness of the nourishment, but the virtue of abstinence

which operated unpremeditatedly and as it were by a prodigy in this soul.

Nor was her love of purity, which she manifested from the very first days after her birth, less astonishing. Being still in her swaddling clothes everytime the servants, carrying her in their arms, went forth upon the public street, the little child showed her repugnance to appear in public with her face uncovered. Wherefore as soon as she perceived that she was out of the house, she burst into a flood of tears; nor was there any way of quieting her, for the experiment was tried more than once, except by spreading over her a veil that would completely cover her and hide her from the eyes of others. So shy of the world did this child show herself and so jealous of her innocence.

These were without doubt unconscious emotions of grace; but signs sufficiently clear, that God in a particular manner watched over the concerns of this beloved soul. And we have in proof of it another fact which is deposed on the testimony of an eye-witness in the juridical process. A few months had hardly passed after the birth of Mary Ann, when her father D. Girolamo passed from this to a better life in those

sentiments of great piety, in which he had always lived. The widowed mother after having paid to her consort the last honours, in order to moderate a little her bitter grief, resolved to go and pass some time at one of her villas, situated in the delightful valley of Cayambe, not very far from Quito. She started therefore from the city, accompanied by her domestics, and rode a mule with her little child resting upon her bosom. Half way upon her journey she had to cross a rivulet that was much swollen by the late rain. She feared on this account to go before; but taking courage from her servants, she urged on her mule and entered the water. She had hardly advanced a few steps before the animal stumbled against a rock and bending unexpectedly forward gave the lady such a violent shock, that without perceiving it she let go the child which fell plump into the water. The terrified mother immedi ately uttered a piercing cry, believing for cer tain that her child was already strangled and carried away by the torrent. But looking down, she saw that so far from being drowned she was standing erect and firm, supported by an invisible han l. As soon as her major-domo heard of

the accident, he immediately threw himself into the water, and taking the little creature, and carrying her to the opposite shore, replaced her in the arms of her mother; whose astonishment was redoubled, for pressing the child to her bosom and minutely examining her, she discovered, that not only her clothes were not wet, but not even the little shoes with which she had seen her standing upon the water.

All these singular evidences of heaven that happened before and after Mary Ann's birth, made her relations conceive the highest hopes of her. All predicted great things of her, and they began from that time to regard her with a certain reverence and more as a thing of God than of the world. The mother in particular, who was a most pious lady, took the greatest care of her and could hardly suffer her to be out of her sight. And when it happened she was obliged from necessity to entrust her for a short time to one of her sisters, she earnestly recommended to them to be extremely cautious for fear of scandalizing that angelic soul Mary Ann, because in her was reared a great servant of God.

Scarcely was she able to stand upon her feet

and to lisp, than her first words were to invoke with tenderness the names of Jesus and Mary, and her first acts were examples of fervour and purity. Being one day led by the hand out of the house by her sisters, D. Martino della Pegna met them and stopping for a moment to speak with them, when he was on the point of taking leave he happened to cast his eyes down upon the little Mary Ann, who was then only two or three years of age, and began to caress and play with her, after which taking her up in his arms he made pretences that he wanted to kiss her. The little child so forcibly resented this act of innocent freedom, and blushing from modesty gave vent to such a flood of bitter tears, and at the same time defended herself so well with her puny little hands, that the doctor struck with astonishment, as he afterwards testified in the juridical process, handed her back immediately to her sisters without kissing her. As to her fervour and devotion, we have the relation of a most charming little incident which took place when she was about three years of age. Her pious mother was in the habit of rising in the middle of the night, and placing herself upon her knees to pray with her arms

extended in the form of a cross. Once it happened that Mary Ann being awake gently raised the curtain with her hand, and she had no sooner seen her mother in that humble posture, than she quietly also got out of bed and placed herself on her knees at her side, and with her arms extended. Here arose a charming contest between the little child and its mother. The one insisted that the other should return to bed and sleep. The other begged to be permitted to imitate her example. In the end the child conquered, and remained a good while praying the best way it knew how, and presenting a spectacle of piety and devotion worthy the eyes of angels.

When she was weaned she omitted nothing of her abstinence, on the contrary she increased it: and moved by the interior spirit which guided her began to fast so rigorously that she frequently fainted from loss of strength and fell into mortal swoons. The mother and servants of the house, who were aware of the cause, tried every means to induce to abate something of that rigour, which it was not possible for a little child of only four years to withstand, who required food to subsist and grow. But they

tried in vain: for even the little presents of fruits and sweet meats, which are so much coveted at that age, although Mary Ann received them with seeming gladness, nevertheless they were hardly received before she gave them to an Indian servant without once tasting them.

Among the other virtues that shone forth in Mary Ann still quite young was a great love towards the poor. Being informed one day that several poor persons were standing at the door expecting to get some alms, she quickly ran to her mother to get something with which to relieve them. The good lady told her that their supply of bread had not yet been brought to the house and that she had nothing that morning to give to the poor: that there was only one cake in the pantry, which she had to keep for her aged father, who would soon be there. The little child remained disconsalate. and her heart not suffering her to dismiss these poor creatures without some relief, moved by compassion and pity she began to weep. Her mother softened at the sight called her to her, and breaking the cake into pieces, gave it to her to distribute them with her own hands to the poor. She did it with a good grace and evident signs of joy:

then returning to her mother she told her not to be uneasy, because God would without fail, provide bread for her aged parent. And in fact, she had hardly uttered the words, before an Indian servant with a little boy, whom they had never seen, presented themselves at the door of the house, and in the name of a certain person, who was also unknown, brought as a present two baskets of the whitest bread. With all their industry they could never discover whence they came, or by whom they had been sent. Only the little Mary Ann with childlike simplicity, and full of joy said—See, mamma dear, how God has quickly sent a great supply of bread for the cake given to the poor. Her relations were astonished at such sense in a little child, that had scarcely begun to walk and speak; and they gave a thousand thanks to the Lord, who was pleased to remunerate an alms with so agreeable a prodigy.

In this manner she went on increasing, beloved of God and man, when all on a sudden she lost her mother, who not long after her return from the villa to the city was called by God to enjoy it heaven, the reward of those christian virtues, which had rendered her an ob-

ject of admiration to the noble ladies of Quito. Mary Ann was very much grieved, having lost in her not only a wise and kind mother, but also an example of perfection and sanctity. But God soon consoled her by giving her in charge to her eldest sister D. Girolama, who more than any other inherited many of the qualities and the virtues of their mother.

CHAPTER II.

HER FIRST FERVOUR IN DEVOTION AND PIETY. SHE IS MIRACULOUSLY PRESERVED FROM MANY DANGERS WHICH THREATENED HER LIFE. MOST EXTRAORDINARY ARTIFICES TO AFFLICT AND TORTURE HER INNOCENT BODY.

THE Blessed Mary Ann was in her fifth year, when having lost her father and mother, she went to live at the house of her sister D. Girolama, who was married to captain D. Cosimo di Casso. This sister had three little daughters Maria, Giovanna, and Sebastiana, with whom she associated her little sister to be brought up

She provided them with excellent masters and mistresses, who instructed them in those arts and accomplishments, which were befitting their noble condition. Mary Ann was so assiduous and diligent, that leaving her nieces far behind, in a short time she learnt to read, write, to play on different instruments, and to sing with considerable grace and elegance. True it is, that her songs were always sacred and devout airs, and she drew from them not only pleasure and delight, but such advantage to her soul, that even in her more mature years, and when she was leading a life entirely separated from the world, she was wont, not unfrequently, to raise her mind to God by means of song. And two witnesses among the others, declared upon oath in the juridical process, that Mary Ann at different times was audibly accompanied in her songs by the angels, and that different little birds flying above her window assisted her with their sweet warbling to praise their common Creator.

She spent all the time, which was not employed in these innocent occupations in exercises of piety: retiring to places set apart for prayer, reading good books and the Lives of Saints, and in vocal prayers. She erected a lit-

tle altar in her chamber and upon it placed a little statue in bass-relief of the most Blessed Virgin and another likewise of the Infant Jesus. Here she passed many hours, either in adorning the two images, or in praying before them; to which moreover she presented whatever little dainty was given her as a present to eat, mortifying in this manner her appetite to do honour to Jesus and Mary. She, although she was younger than her three nieces, still by her wisdom and maturity beyond her age, had acquired such authority and reverence, that they all regarded her as their guide and mistress. Of this she availed herself to arouse within them the same devotion that burnt in herself. She would gather together the little girls of the neighbourhood who were as innocent as herself, and in company with her three nieces station them before the little altar, and in two choirs make them recite the rosary and sing the litanies. She then celebrated all the Sundays with greater pomp and show, and especially the festivals of our Lord and the Queen of heaven. On the preceding vigil she prepared her companions, then all the next day she occupied them in devout prayers, and a little before it

grew dark she closed the festival with a procession, singing pious hymns whilst they carried by turn the two images of the divine Infant and his Blessed Mother.

God was pleased to manifest by a wonderful prodigy how pleasing to him were these pious diversions of the little children. On a certain festival of the Blessed Virgin, Mary Ann had invited all the ladies belonging to the house of Paredes, and other distinguished ones of the city, who came very willingly, attracted by the piety of these little innocent creatures. Now whilst she was, according to custom, arranging the procession, it happened that a candle bending set fire to a very fine rose-coloured veil, with which Mary Ann had dressed the statue. As soon as the flames broke forth, all the ladies who were present uttered a piercing cry: and Mary Ann being made aware of the accident, immediately ran thither, and with an intrepidity more than childish, extended her hands to the burning veil, and raising it quietly from the statue, stretched it out to see where it was burnt. But to the great surprise of all it was found perfectly whole and without the smallest injury.

Another time, after having fatigued herself the whole day with her pious occupations, the little girl being overcome by drowsiness, gently fell asleep. After a short time she awoke, fixed her eyes aloft, and as if surprised between wonder and joy, quickly called to her companions to run and see the three bright stars, which she saw glittering over her head: be quick said she, and awake; because it is not right that you should be sleeping, whilst my spouse keeps watch to do me favours. Her companions came immediately, and placed themselves at her side, but they saw nothing. Mary Ann insisted that they should look with more attention; and they were grieved that it was not permitted them to enjoy that pleasing sight. They were however at that moment seized by a pleasing sense of devotion, which filled their souls with delight. They afterwards asked Mary Ann, what was the meaning of the appearance of these three stars. To whom with ingenuous candour she briefly replied; I think notwithstanding my misery the most august Trinity has chosen me to be his temple.

This event being divulged abroad, many took occasion from it to call Mary Ann *the child of*

the star: and they became more and more grounded in the opinion already conceived that she was destined to great things for the honour of God. In this opinion they were not a little confirmed afterward, seeing the singular protection of heaven, by which she twice escaped by miracle from evident danger of death. The little girls had one day ascended to the top-story of the house, in which D. Cosimo had caused a new floor to be laid. Whilst they were amusing themselves running along the scaffolding, Mary Ann was either thoughtlessly pushed by her companions, or approaching too near the edge and missing her step, was precipitated from the highest part of the building and fell upon a heap of rubbish and stones, which were piled up against the wall. At the heart-rending shriek of the little girls D. Cosimo went immediately around, and learning the accident, hurried down into the street, expecting for certain to find his little relative not only dead, but crushed and mashed. But he had hardly reached the door, when whom should he see approaching him but Mary Ann, full of joy and smiling, and without any hurt at all. He was perfectly astonished, and could attribute the

fact to nothing else than to the protection of the angels, who had supported the saint in her perilous fall.

From another imminent risk she was timely preserved by an interior light infused into her mind by Almighty God. The servant of God having noticed, that in the public processions that were accustomed to be made in Holy Week, there were several persons, who in the garb of penance carried heavy crosses upon their shoulders, was inflamed with the desire of imitating them; for this purpose she called her nieces to her and earnestly exhorted them to endeavor to procure also three instruments of penance and adopt them in their domestic procession. And as a word from her was sufficient, they immediately agreed to the proposal. But they had no crosses; and Mary Ann undertook the task of providing them. She collected as many pieces of wood as were necessary, and not to be disturbed by any one, led her companions into a court-yard at some distance from the house to construct the crosses. And they were all busily engaged in this pious work, when the Blessed servant of God suddenly rose from her work, and in a great hurry called her nieces to follow

her. And because they were slow in moving, she ran to where they were, and taking them by the hand anxiously led them to the other side of the yard. Then, all being now safe, a high wall fell with a terrible crash upon the very spot where the children had been at work, and which would without doubt have crushed them had they not been timely removed. Mary Ann herself, although then quite young, at the very thought of the great risk she had run with her companions, burst into a flood of tender tears and gave most humble thanks to God, offering him in all sincerity and affection her own life in exchange, which he had already three times given her, by preserving it by miracle from death.

And in fact, from that time forward that she regarded herself in no other light than as a victim offered to Jesus, I can give no better proof, than by relating the excessively sharp and extraordinary penances, which she began to practice even at the tender age of six to seven, and which she afterwards increased without measure, as we shall see in the course of this history. She felt herself all inflamed with divine love, and sensibly excited to maltreat her innocent

body to resemble more closely her afflicted spouse Jesus, as she was always accustomed to call him. Happening to be present one day in the church at a funeral oration, which was pronounced in praise of a Religious, who had died in the odour of sanctity, a lady and relative of Mary Ann, having heard the wonderful austerity practiced during the life of the deceased, O who could, she exclaimed, imitate this servant of God! To whom the Blessed Mary Ann who sat at her side, with a gravity beyond her years, replied—with God's help love can do all. Thus, without being aware of it, she assigned the cause, from which she drew all her force and strength to go forward in her austere life. Besides, it is necessary here first of all to inform the reader, that God, always admirable in his saints, was pleased to guide this his beloved servant by ways quite extraordinary and out of the usual course; and hence he would be very much mistaken, who would wish to regard them with a human eye and judge them only by the rules of human prudence. The life of this blessed servant of God was one continued prodigy of divine grace; a very rare one, and, when we take into consideration all the circum-

stances of age, condition, sex, perhaps the only one of its kind to be found in the annals of the church. This being promised, let us come to the recital of facts.

Mary Ann had fastened around their rooms fourteen crosses, before which she and her nieces were accustomed every Friday to perform the *Stations of the cross.* She marched before carrying upon her shoulders a heavy cross of wood, and with the soles of her shoes lined with hard peas. Every one can easily imagine how painful this journey, which was by no means short, must have been to a little child, and which she performed with great slowness, passing from one room to another, and stopping at every station. Suffice it to say that not unfrequently it happened, that tormented by the pain of her feet and oppressed by the weight of the cross she would fall helpless to the ground with evident danger of being seriously hurt or injured. At other times she would cause the cross to be brought to her by her companions, and in receiving it from their hands, salute it with the most tender expressions of affection, and then dragging herself along on her bare knees with that weight upon her shoul-

ders, visit one by one the statio s of the *via crucis*. We know that the skin of her knees was torn and that she left behind her, wherever she passed, large marks of fresh blood. Neither did her sufferings terminate with the close of this martyrdom: for the wounds in her tender flesh being irritated by a repetition of such ill treatment, she continued for many days to feel the most acute pain.

Nor with all this was she yet satiated: on the contrary the ardent desire, which she had, of suffering for her spouse, sharpened her wit to discover new methods of tormenting herself. And she invented one among the others as dangerous in its execution as it was painful to her, and therefore more in accordance with her taste. On Holy-Thursday she had scattered at the foot of the altars of the *via crucis* various little bundles of sharp thorns, which she had provided for this purpose. After this commencing according to custom to make the stations, when she arrived at each one of them, she deposited upon the ground and in the midst of the thorns her cross, and after saying some prayers, begged her companions, that when she would bend down to kiss the sacred wood, they would give

her a violent push upon the head. And the request was made by her with such affection and in so courteous a manner, that the little girls without further consideration acquiesced by pushing her head violently upon the thorns. The stations being gone through together with their reiterated sufferings that accompanied them, the Blessed child got up with her face horribly pierced and covered with blood, but full of fervour and inexpressible joy. God so disposed that neither her sister nor her brother-in-law were ever aware of this cruel infliction, to which they would without doubt have put a stop; as also that none of the thorns should ever once strike Mary Ann's eyes, which might easily have happened.

Whatever work of penance she saw practiced by others, she made use of every means not only to imitate it in herself, but to surpass it, by adding other austerities to it of her own invention. One year whilst assisting at Holy Week, she was wonderfully taken with the discipline, and the adoration of the cross, which she saw some devout christians practising. Wherefore when she had returned home, she immediately set about making several disci-

plines, which she afterwards distributed to her little friends, animating them by her example and inflamed words to scourge themselves for the love of Jesus, who had endured and suffered so much for their salvation. But as for the adoration of the cross, she wished that horrible torment, which we have described above, to be reserved entirely for herself. She encircled the cross which was to be adored and which was extended upon the ground, with many and sharp thorns: and when she bent down with her hands behind her upon her shoulders, in order to kiss it, her companions had, one at a time, to give her a good thrust: so that falling heavily upon the thorns, she rose with her face all pricked and pierced in a dreadful manner. But this time her relatives perceived the wounds, and discovering from the innocent children the cause, they forbad Mary Ann that dangerous and indiscreet penance: and she who would rather have died than commit the slightest act of disobedience against the command of her superiors instantly obeyed.

In order to disturb the little sleep, which she took at night, she devised a species of penance, which only her great desire of suffering could

have suggested to her mind. She provided herself with five stones of moderate size, and having excavated in the pavement at the foot of her little altar, a cross, she placed in its cavity these stones, but so arranged, that the unequal parts of the stones might project above the surface of the pavement. Here and there around the cross she strewed a quantity of nettles and other pungent herbs. Her bed being prepared in this manner, every Friday night, after having first entreated her associates that they would recommend her to her divine spouse, she lay down to sleep, extending her arms upon the cross, with a piece of wood for a pillow under her head. The blessed little child continued, as long as she could, motionless upon this horrible bed of torture: but if sometimes, either overcome by sleep or pain, she allowed her body to roll off the stones, on whatever side she turned, falling with the whole weight of her body upon these thorny herbs, she revenged herself, as she was wont to say for insufferable delicacy. Her companions who were alone privy to this painful martyrdom, testified in the process, that it was generally necessary for them in the morning to lift her from off her bed;

but in proportion as she was exhausted in body the vigour of her mind increased.

She would have done much more to satisfy her insatiable love of penance, if she had not been constrained to be continually with her nieces, and have them witnesses of her actions. Nevertheless she laboured with so much art and industry, that in the end she succeeded in using these very children as instruments to torment her body, and not to be conscious of it. As if a vain spirit of bravado actuated her, she began to say, that she, although she was the youngest of them, had such force of mind as to be able to sustain without flinching the onset of the whole of them: and then challenge them to come to the proof and try, if they could by striking her draw from her lips a sign or any expression of pain. The little children being provoked in this manner, as was but natural, made a simultaneous charge on the back of Mary Ann and with all the force of their arms struck her on all sides without measure or discretion. And because she made as it were fun of their weakness in order to excite them rather than show any feeling, they became more than ever vexed at their inability to elicit a word of com-

plaint, picked up the five stones, which she kept as we said, in the cavity of the cross, and with them unmercifully pounded her all over her body. This which was diversion for the girls, but a terrible torture to Mary Ann lasted many weeks and she would wished to have it repeated every Monday and Wednesday: but at last her companions, although simple and innocent, discovered by the livid spots and wounds the outrage they had committed on their holy mistress, and refused to lend a helping hand to a work that could not but be extremely painful to her.

It was when she was shut up in her room at night, that she gave full scope to her fervour. At that time not being observed by any one, she cruelly scourged herself two or three different times, either with whips, or nettles and other sharp-pointed thistles, which she secretly collected in the domestic garden. An Indian servant found her by accident thus engaged, and being greatly surprised to see a little girl of not more than six years of age, with a bundle of nettles in her hand, striking herself upon her naked shoulders, from which blood was profusely flowing, asked her in all simplicity, if that cruel flagellation did not cause her pain?

Yes, replied Mary Ann, I sensibly feel the weight of these blows: but I do so to satisfy for my sins. And I beg you for the love of God not to say a word about it to my relatives, but keep it secret.

CHAPTER III.

THE SOLITARY AND PENITENTIAL LIFE WHICH SHE LED IN THE VILLA AND IN THE CITY; ATTEMPTS TWICE TO FLY FROM HOME TO GO AND CONVERT THE INFIDELS, AND TO LIVE IN SOLITUDE, AND IS PREVENTED BY ALMIGHTY GOD IN WONDEREUL WAYS.

But although the Blessed Mary Ann neglected no means to conceal those great and extraordinary acts of austerity and mortification which we have just related, still the paleness of her face, the extenuation of her body, and the almost total prostration of her strength were effects too plain and evident, and calculated of themselves to lead every one to the knowledge

of the cause. Wherefore D. Girolama becoming alarmed about the health of her little sister determined to remove her for a short time from the daily solitude of the house and bring her with the family to one of her villas about five leagues distant, where she hoped, that the change of scenery and the pleasures of the country would induce her to relax a little her way of life. As soon therefore as the weather permitted, they quitted Quito and came to Saguance, which was the name of the villa.

But wherever she went, Mary Ann always carried along that ardent spirit of fervour by which God interiourly governed her. As soon as she was arrived at the villa, whilst the domestics were all busy in putting the house in order, and her three nieces amusing themselves by running about every where, as children are wont to do, Mary Ann seeing the time favourable left the house and under pretence of diverting herself for a little while in the open air, unobserved by any one, entered and hid herself in a neighbouring forest. D. Girolama very soon perceived the absence of her sister, and being in some fear, gave immediate orders to the servants and her maids to go every where

in search of her. And it pleased God that one of the domestics should penetrate into the thicket, and in his search amongst the thick branches of the trees, discover the little child at a distance. She was kneeling at the foot of an old and withered trunk, which she had pictured to herself as the column, at which her spouse Jesus had been bound, and scourging herself upon her naked shoulders with a handful of thorny thistles. The flesh was already cut and bruised and the blood was falling in drops upon the ground. The good servant astonished and horrified at what he saw, stood for some time motionless, looking at the affecting spectacle: then, without breathing, turned round and ran to inform D. Girolama, who hurried to the spot with her daughters. It can scarcely be believed how displeased the servant of God was at being surprised in this act. She blushed deeply, and covering herself immediately stood up, and as if nothing at all was the matter, with a joyful face and beaming with love joined her nieces and returned to the house.

But she could never afterwards forget this solitude. We must say, that God communica-

ted himself to her in an intimate manner, infusing into her mind the sweetest heavenly consolations. Wherefore, by divine disposition not having been prohibited by her sister, every time the blessed child would secretly withdraw from the house, she quickly flew to her favorite forest: and there she remained long hours pouring forth her heart in fervent colloquies with her Beloved. She rejoiced exceedingly that she was here observed by no one and could to her heart's content satisfy her ardent love of mortification. Three several times she was surprised, whilst scourging herself to blood. Nay more, the domestics whenever they missed her from the house always went to the woods, where they were certain of finding her.

Once she returned about dusk to her beloved retreat, but with her strength so completely exhausted, that being overcome by weariness and drowsiness she gently fell asleep in the arms of her sister D. Girolama. This sister, who tenderly loved her, held her quietly upon her bosom, and wishing to put her to bed to repose with greater comfort, began very carefully to undress her: and taking off her upper garments saw that her under dress was all bathed

in blood. D. Girolama was frightened at the sight, and cautiously investigating the cause, found that her little sister had her sides all torn by a plant that was very thorny, which was still bound tightly around her. The good lady could not contain herself at the sight and melting into tears raised her eyes and hands to heaven, humbling herself before God, who placed under her eyes an example of such austerity in that little innocent soul. Then moved to pity for Mary Ann, she tried to free her body from that unusual instrument of torture. But notwithstanding all the care she took to perform it in the most delicate manner possible, the little child perceived her, and between sleep and awake, with an unconscious motion immediately placed her hands upon the thorny bandage and exclaimed—"Ah they are taking from me my dearest delight." A little after, becoming perfectly conscious, when she first discovered herself in the arms of her sister her face reddened with blushes, and without uttering a word she quietly withdrew, leaving the other, I know not, whether more surprised or grieved.

Such were the amusements and the childish pastimes, which she enjoyed at the villa. Cer-

tain it is, that being about to return in a short time to the city, nothing grieved her more than the thought of abandoning her favorite retreat in the woods, where God had imparted to her a taste of the delights of Paradise, by closely uniting her to himself by love. Notwithstanding this, she knew how to find her solitude within the domestic walls. For the purpose of distracting her a little from that continual application of mind, D. Girolama had ordered her every day, at an appointed hour, to conduct her three nieces, her sister D. Agnese de Paredes, and D. Scolastica Sarmiento, who were all brought up together, into the garden attached to the house and try and procure them some innocent diversion. Mary Ann promptly obeyed: and at the appointed hour never failed to call her companions and with the greatest pleasure lead them with her into the garden. Arrived there, after she had engaged them in some of their merry efforts, she would gradually withdraw, and go in search of some remote and hidden corner, where, taking occasion from the variety of plants and flowers, and singing of little birds, she raised her soul to the contemplation of heavenly things, and to the love of her di-

vine spouse. She was seen walking along as one wrapt in ecstacy, with her face inflamed, her eyes swimming in tears and wholly absorpt in God. At other times unable to master the interior fire which was consuming her, she was heard to give vent to it in inflamed sighs and in short but ardent aspirations of affection. D. Scolastica Sarmiento, and D. Maria di Cassc, eye-witnesses deposed in the juridical process, that sometimes in order to temper this interior heat, she would open her dress, and try to cool her breast by exposing it to the open air, and at other times taking a bundle of nettles in her hand and striking herself with them, exclaim in tender accents: Ah the right side of my loving spouse! Ah the pierced side of my crucified Jesus! In consequence of the stings which these nettles left, her breast was swollen and disfigured: and she immersed in an ocean of sweetness, as it were out of her senses, did not perceive that she was attentively observed by her companions.

In proportion as her love towards God went on increasing, her desire that all men should know and love him also increased. Not satisfied with using all the means in her power to

direct in the right path her sisters, nieces, and friends, with whom she conversed, she began to aspire after more magnanimous undertakings. Being often brought to the church of the Society of Jesus, she had frequently heard them speak in the sermons of the Missions of Japan, of the Morea, of China, and of other parts of the East Indies. Every day she received information at Quito of the vast provinces of Maragnone, *los Magnas*, where a countless number of infidels were eternally lost without resource, the few missionaries of the Society who laboured there indefatigably, not being sufficient to supply the wants. It seemed therefore to Mary Ann that it would be her fault if so many people remained in the darkness of heathenism, nor did she believe that the weakness of her sex and the tender age of only seven or eight years would be a sufficient excuse to justify her before God. It happened also, that at this time they were celebrating in the church of the Society the solemn festival of the three holy Jesuits and Japanese Martyrs, Paul Miki, John de Goto, and James Kisai, lately raised to the honours of the altar. Mary Ann, when she heard in the panegerics the great sufferings which

they endured for the propogation and defence of the holy faith, felt her zeal rekindled, and the most lively desire took possession of her heart to give in imitation of them her blood and life for the love of Christ. Not being able any longer to master these interior emotions, she determined to put them into immediate execution. Wherefore calling aside her three nieces D. Giovanna, D. Sebastiana di Casso and D. Scolastica, she disclosed to them in secret her intentions. She told them that her heart was lively pierced with grief at the sight of so many souls, who in the country of the infidels, were travelling the way of death, from the want of persons to point out to them the road to heaven. That she felt herself inspired to overcome all human respect and go to the provinces of Maragnone, where she hoped to rescue, with God's help, some infidel from perdition and bring him to the knowledge of the true God. That she would consider herself happy, if in reward for her fatigues, she could obtain the palm of martyrdom, which others were fortunate enough to obtain. That she thanked them for the good company they had afforded her down to that time, and en-

treated them not to confide her resolution to any one before she had put it in execution.

The little girls were thrown into the utmost consternation when they heard the unexpected resolution she had formed, and grieving over the loss of their holy mistress, with tears in their eyes entreated her not to abandon them. That if nevertheless she was determined to go to the land of the infidels, not to disdain to have them also there as her companions, that they offered themselves with their whole heart to her: and after her example they promised to fear no dangers, not even death itself. Mary Ann delighted with having gained her companions over to her holy enterprise, accepted the offering, and fixed their flight for the following night. Their whole preparation consisted in providing a few clothes and a small quantity of biscuit; this alone seemed to them to be sufficient for a journey, of which they could form no conception. Nothing now remained but to secure the keys to open the door of the house: and this the blessed child undertook to manage. Finally the better to conceal their project, they all went early to bed, having agreed beforehand with Mary Ann, who was to wake them at a certain hour. Things

being brought to this point, God, who only desired the good will for the deed, by omens beyond the control of the children, willed that Mary Ann should be overpowered by such a profound sleep at the very time when she was always accustomed, about the middle of the night, to be awake and to go to prayer, that she did not open her eyes till it was broad day-light. Meanwhile the domestics were in search of the keys of the house, and finding them near the servant of God, gave notice of it to D. Cosimo and D. Girolama, who easily understood the matter. For the children frightened at seeing such a commotion through the house, and believing for certain that they were discovered, went immediately, as little innocent children always do, to reveal to their parents, the secret of the premeditated flight of their aunt to go and preach the faith to the people of Maragnone.

Her first design having failed, and still feeling herself more than ever interiourly convinced that it was her duty to spend her life in solitude, Mary Ann fixed on another plan which seemed more easy to be carried out. There was not very far from Quito a very high mountain called by the natives Picincia, on the top

of which was a terrible and frightful volcano. The citizens in order to save their lives, because it often vomited forth quantities of ashes and red-hot stones, had had recourse to the intercession of the most Blessed Virgin, and dedicated to her a little chapel on the side of the mountain. In times past the veneration of the people for this holy place was very great: but their fervour afterwards cooling, it became almost entirely abandoned and neglected. It seemed therefore to Mary Ann very well adapted to satisfy at the same time, her devotion towards the Blessed Virgin and her desire of living in solitude, by devoting herself to pass her life in this retreat. She communicated her new project to her companions: and they immediately approving of it, offered themselves anew to follow her. Before, however, putting their plan in execution, they assembled many days together to discuss and establish the form and tenour of their solitary life. And first of all that none of the citizens, coming up the mountain of Picincia, might be ever able to know them, they resolved to wound their faces with pieces of glass and then fill the incisions with coal dust, and thus disfigure themselves in such

a manner as to defy all recognition. They had seen this done by the Indians of the savage tribes, who frequently came down to Quito to make a display of their horrid beauty. As for their dress it was determined, that it should be coarse and out of fashion, contenting themselves to wear patched clothes as became those who wished to lead a poor and penitential life in an hermitage: and for food they agreed, that every week upon a certain day one of them should descend from the mountain and go and beg from door to door in the city a little bread for the *poor slaves of Mary*, by which name they were to be called.

These things being resolved upon by common consent, they only waited a favourable opportunity of secretly leaving the house: which was to be done, not by night as was formerly intended, but in broad day-light, in order to give less ground for suspicion to their parents. Nor had they to wait long; for having discovered that D. Cosimo and D. Girolama had gone to the country at no great distance from the city about some business and would remain there several days, they began to prepare without delay for their departure; and taking a bundle

containing some clothes and a small provision of food, secretly left the house, and took a by-path that led towards the mountain. And they had already ascended half-a-league up the acclivity, and being well satisfied with the good success of their flight, were praising and thanking God, when a wild bull darting suddenly from the neighbouring forest made strait at them with bended head to gore them. To escape from the danger that threatened them, they found no better way than to throw themselves in haste into a ditch, that was aside of the road and there protected, wait till the beast would either turn back or proceed on. And when they saw that he had gone away to some distance from them, coming forth from their place of security, they courageously started to resume their march. But behold the bull returns to the charge with more ferocity than ever: and so, as often as they attempted to go forward on their way, so often did the animal return to stop them. Mary Ann was much more grieved at this than any of her companions; and fully persuaded that it was the devil, who taking that form endeavored to turn them from their holy resolution, tried frequently

with the sign of the cross, to put him to flight: but seeing that this did no good, she drew aside and kneeling down turned to consult God to know what she should do. The short prayer ended, the Lord, who this time only required of her a promptness of will, made her distinctly hear in her soul an interior voice, which told her, that it was the will of heaven, that she should lead a life perfectly estranged from the things of the world, not in a desert place, but indeed in her own house: wherefore having joined her companions, "God," said she, "does not wish us to go to the desert; but wishes that we turn back; and we must obey him." These words were hardly uttered by Mary Ann, before the bull ceased to threaten them, and disappearing in the woods they soon lost sight of him. Then the little girls, turned their backs to the mountain, and believing that their flight was not yet discovered by the domestics, hastened to re-enter the house. But they were disappointed in their hopes: for the servants being informed of the departure of the little girls and aware of the flight once before attempted, immediately suspected the true cause, and informed D. Girolama of it, who was then

returned to the city, and who easily obtained a full account from her daughters of the whole adventure.

CHAPTER IV.

SHE IS NOT YET EIGHT YEARS OF AGE AND IS ADMITTED TO HOLY COMMUNION, FOR WHICH SHE PREPARES HERSELF WITH GREAT FERVOUR AND DERIVES ABUNDANT FRUIT FROM IT. SHE CONSECRATES HERSELF TO GOD BY THE THREE SIMPLE VOWS OF POVERTY, CHARITY AND OBEDIENCE. GIVES HERSELF UP ENTIRELY TO THE DIRECTION OF HER CONFESSOR. AND SUFFERS CONTRADICTIONS AND OPPOSITION ON ACCOUNT OF HER DAILY COMMUNION.

THESE were, as every one sees, interiour impulses of grace, which was disposing the Blessed Mary Ann for that austere and penitential life, which she afterwards led for the space of fourteen years. But not knowing yet distinctly what

was the divine will in this, nor having those who would be its interpreters, as she had not yet given herself up to the guidance of her confessors, it frequently happened that she lent a willing ear to every good emotion that sprung up in her heart and endeavored to second it as much as she could, following rather the impetus of her fervour than the proper rules of discretion. Hence it was, that whilst God on the one side pleased with her readiness, accepted the good will, in wonderful ways on the other side prevented the execution of it.

As for the rest, in proportion as the servant of God advanced in years, her soul daily increased in perfection. A disrelish and disgust for the things of the earth, a love of solitude and silence, a fervour of piety and devotion, an intimate communication and familiarity with God, and a continual penitential vigour, notwithstanding the extreme purity, and the greatest delicacy of conscience were every day more and more visible in her. All these things well considered induced D. Girolama to think that she ought no longer to deprive that innocent soul of the participation of the holy mysteries, and particularly of holy communion, for which she

seemed so well disposed. The only difficulty in the way was her tender age, as she had not yet completed her eighth year. But there was no cause for delaying on this account: because Mary Ann had not only acquired the perfec use of reason, which in her certainly anticipat ed her years, but in all her actions displayed such maturity of sense and ripeness of judgment, that she astonished all who conversed with her. It only then remained to see, if she were well instructed in the mysteries of faith, and if she sufficiently comprehended the things which are proposed to our belief in the most adorable sacrament of the Eucharist. To clear up this point she was examined by wise and prudent men, who were struck at the depth of knowledge she displayed in her first answers to their questions, and as is recorded in the process, were of opinion, that such knowledge in her was not natural, but supernaturally infused by God. Because, they found that she not only believed with the strongest conviction, but spoke in terms of the most abstruse and hidden mysteries, as if she had them before her corporal eyes; and as for her interior disposition, she had languished for a long time with the mo

ardent desire, and eagerly panted to be fed on the bread of angels. D. Girolama being informed of all this, immediately told her sister to get ready to make her first communion at the approaching festival.

At this good news, the virgin of Christ exulted with joy, and began forthwith to prepare the habitation for her beloved spouse. She redoubled her fasts, which were already three days a week, on bread and water: increased the measure of her other penances and the fervour of her prayers. When the appointed day arrived, she was conducted by her sister to the church of the Society of Jesus, and consigned to Father John Camaccio to hear her confession. This Religious was a man of much virtue and learning, besides being very expert in conducting souls to the highest perfection. He was teaching at the time Theology, and as General Prefect of studies, presided over our University of St. Gregory. After hearing her general confession, which the Servant of God wished to make from the first moments of her recollection, he remained as it were beside himself with wonder, in seeing in a little girl of a few years, knowledge so profound and such lofty senti-

ments of God and heavenly things, and above all the most ardent desires of aspiring by the practice of virtue, to the most sublime and heroic sanctity. After this he not only comforted her by permitting her to approach the eucharistic table, but gently remonstrated with her sister D. Girolama, for having so long deprived that innocent and pure soul, free from every earthly blemish, of the salutary grace of the sacraments. Mary Ann also in her turn was enraptured with the wisdom and goodness of her confessor, and resolved forthwith to give herself up entirely to his guidance and direction in her spiritual concerns.

I will not attempt to describe the interiour affection, with which she received her Lord in the sacrament of the altar, nor the interiour delights, which she enjoyed that day. Being hidden things, we can form no correct judgment of them. We can, however, from that little, which was exteriourly manifested in her actions, make some conjecture of how much was concealed within her soul. When therefore she had poured forth her soul for a considerable time in returning thanks to Almighty God, she returned home and full of an unusual joy which shone

upon her face, called her nieces, and said to them: That henceforth they were to respect her tongue and venerate her soul, which had been sanctified that morning by coming in contact with her immaculate Spouse Jesus. After this she divested herself of a beautiful little silk dress, which D. Girolama had wished her to use for the occasion; and with ardent prayers entreated her never more to think of providing her with ornaments of that description, which she could not bear to wear. The only bitterness and confusion she experienced on that day, she said, was that very silk dress, which was not for her; and consequently that every hour seemed a thousand years before she could return home and lay aside that miserable vanity. And she added with much feeling, that being born, not to please the eyes of men, but solely to become acceptable to her heavenly Spouse, she had no need of adoring her body with outward garments, but to deck her soul every day more and more with the garb of virtue. And that she said the truth she quickly proved by facts, generously retrenching every thing, that savoured of earth and the world, and devoting herself a perfect holocaust to the service and

love of God. She renounced the title of *Donna*, which, according to the custom of the country belonged to her by right of birth and nobility of family; and that all might know, that she was no longer, to use the expression, her own property, but belonged entirely to her heavenly Spouse, she assumed the name of *Mary Ann of Jesus*, nor from that time did she wish to be otherwise addressed; and finally she bound herself by vow to preserve her purity unspotted till her death.

This was the rich fruit, which the Blessed Mary Ann derived from her first communion. And I would wish that certain parents, who delay so long to make their children partake of the holy sacraments, would learn a useful lesson from the example before them. They wait till the devil and sin enter to darken and destroy the purity and innocence of their souls, whilst Jesus Christ and his grace ought to be the first to take possesion of them and render them strong and generous by their presence against the assaults of their enemies. Boys and girls may also learn hence, with what dispositions they ought to come prepared to receive the eucharistic bread, and with what diligence guard and in-

crease the fruit they receive. As for Mary Ann. she derived such strength from the first taste of those heavenly delights, with which she felt her whole soul inundated by her divine guest, that she did not know how to fix bounds to her progress in holiness. All her thoughts and affections were for Jesus: and for many days afterwards she could speak but of him, nor desire aught but him. The fulness of the grace received, instead of satiating her, had excited in her the greatest hunger for this divine bread: and therefore not being able to resist its cravings, she went immediately to Father Camaccio her confessor, and humbly entreated him to give her permission frequently to approach the eucharistic table.

But the Father, who had discovered in her from the time of her first confession a soul capable of every degree of advancement in perfection, did not wish immediately to satisfy all her desires, but pretended to oppose and contradict her wishes. And when he saw that the Servant of God promptly obeyed and submitted to every proof, he applied himself with much care to cultivate her soul. And first of all he acquainted her with the spiritual exercises of

St. Ignatius; and in them he explained to her the practical method of praying mentally, of contemplating with fruit the divine mysteries of the life and passion of Jesus Christ: of purifying the conscience every day by means of the two examens, general and particular: of correcting, discerning and judging the spirits, which move us to act, and of knowing which are good and safe, which bad and deceitful; all according to the wise prescriptions and rules given by the Saint in his admirable book of the spiritual exercises. Of the penances some were allowed. others denied her: and finally as for communion it was determined, that for the present she might receive every Sunday, and every festival that happened to come during the week.

Thus she increased every day, more and more in virtue, when, on reaching her tenth year, she felt herself inspired to consecrate herself wholly to God and unite herself to him by closer ties, renouncing all the things of the earth and divesting herself of her own will. Wherefore when she renewed her vow of perpetual chastity made two years before, she added

the two other simple vows of poverty and obedience. Father Camaccio was not pleased that she had presumed, without consulting him, to bind herself by ties so indissoluble. Therefore to put her virtue to the test, he refused to ratify what she had done; and in the meanwhile, carefully observed the new way of life, which she would lead. But after a short time, seeing the great strides which she made towards the summit of perfection, he not only approved of the vows she had made, but permitted her to renew them, as she did, writing also two copies of the formula, one of which she retained, and the other she gave to her confessor. Of all the property that her parents left her for a dowry, she kept nothing for herself, but made a donation of the whole of it to D. Giovanna her niece; and as for habitation and food, she threw herself upon the charity of her sister D. Girolama. We shall see in its proper place, how perfectly she observed these three vows. Let it suffice for the present to say, that according to the depositions of her confessors, she was never guilty in the whole course of her life, of a breach of them that would amount to a full, deliberate venial sin. And she was not a Reli-

gious confined to a cloister, but a secular in the world, in the midst of the difficulties and dangers of an universal corruption.

It is true, that she drew her whole strength from the union with her heavenly Spouse in the holy communion. Wherefore, not content with receiving him every Sunday and festival of the year, she earnestly entreated her confessor, to allow her to approach oftener: and he becoming more liberal, permitted her to receive holy communion three times a week. This however only served to increase the hunger of her pure soul which was enamoured with God. She was interiourly inflamed with the most ardent desire of receiving still oftener Jesus Christ within her bosom; and awaited with the greatest anxiety the day, on which, according to the permission of her confessor, she could approach the holy table. It was observed, that that wonderful prodigy was renewed in her, which the holy Scriptures relate of the prophet Elias, who being fed with that food that was miraculously brought him, walked with strength and vigour unto the holy mount of God. Mary Ann after communicating, felt such vigour and strength of spirit, which overflowing, and as it were,

taking possession of her, she needed during that day, no material food to support her. On the contrary, on the day that intervened, and on which she had to abstain from the food of the trong, she seemed sensibly to languish as it were, for want of food, and from loss of strength, to need frequent sustenance. Father Camaccio, to whom the servant of God every day rendered an exact account of her conscience, knew her sufferings; and at last considering the extreme purity of her soul, and the ardent love she has for Jesus, after recommending the matter to God with many prayers, determined to allow her to approach daily. But he first asked her, what was the preparation she was accustomed to make, and being told, that her care was always to strive, that her union with her heavenly Spouse should every day increase, and become more intimate: and therefore studied to seek him and love him more and more. Hearing this, it did not seem to him that he ought to deprive Mary Ann any longer of that great happiness; and gave her permission to approach every day.

Whilst the servant of God was, as it were, out of herself with the joy she had received,

there suddenly rose one of the most furious storms of contradictions against her. In those days the faithful were not much in the habit of frequenting the holy table; and those who approached every eighth day were considered far advanced in the things of God. As soon as it was known therefore, that Mary Ann, a little girl who at the time had hardly passed her twelfth year, communicated every day with the approbation of her director, some began to murmur, and in a short time, as is always the case, she was the common talk all over the city. Every one wished to meddle in the matter and to censure her without mercy: and not alone the common people, but men also very much esteemed for learning and piety, who from not knowing Mary Ann, judged her according to the common report which was circulated about. They did not deny that she was a child of irreproachable morals and of an angelical purity; nevertheless that she was too young and perhaps, for want of sufficient reason, not even arrived at a proper age to understand the mysteries, that are contained in that most august sacrament. That daily communion was with difficulty allowed to persons of a mature age, of

solid virtue, enclosed in a monastery, or distinguished by Almighty God with particular marks of favour. What discretion was there then in granting it to a little child of twelve years of age, living in the midst of the world and its distractions? Father Camaccio had enough to do to defend himself and his penitent: because the rumour instead of dying away increased daily: and reached such a point that it excited the fears and suspicion of the Superiours of the Society and of the Episcopal officers of Quito. Mary Ann was very much afflicted, not so much for herself, as for her director, upon whom the heaviest censures fell, as a man of little wisdom and experience in guiding souls in the way of virtue. Nevertheless she was never for a moment discouraged or dejected in the midst of so much contradiction; but whilst on the one side she suffered every thing with perfect resignation to the divine will and endured it with patience, her great love for Jesus Christ in the sacrament, on the other, rendered her courageous to surmount every obstacle. And speaking one day with her confessor, who seeing the brand of discord ignited, was at a perfect loss to know what to do, she encouraged him to place his

trust in God who would put a term to this opposition; "my father," said she, "let us confide inthe Lord; that his holy will be done, and not that of men." And it turned out just as she had predicted. For the Bishop, in order to do away with every cause of contention and disagreement, called before him a council of the wisest and most learned men, and in the presence also of the Superiours of the Religious Orders wished that the *pro & con* of the cause should be examined: and as Almighty God wished, urged by the weight of the reasons brought forward, with one common accord, they approved the conduct of Father Camaccio, and left the servant of God full liberty to communicate every day. It is true that some individuals did not cease therefore to scoff at her for some time: but she was not at all disturbed, and only in order to prevent their talk, she prudently strove to communicate at a mass, which was said very late, and at a time when few persons were in the church. The fame of her admirable sanctity being afterwards increased, not only the tongues of her enemies were silenced, but they were all turned into the highest commendation of her. A few years later, Father Camaccio having been obliged to quit Quito, she

chose successively for her directors the very fathers, who had shown themselves somewhat opposed to her on this point; and all of them as soon as they saw by what spirit she was guided, condemned themselves as rash in having prejudged without a knowledge of the cause. Thus ended this no small contraction raised against the servant of God.

CHAPTER V.

SEVERAL TIMES THE BLESSED MARY ANN IS ON THE VERY POINT OF ENTERING A MONASTERY TO BECOME A RELIGIOUS, BUT IS ALWAYS PREVENTED BY ALMIGHTY GOD FROM EXECUTING HER RESOLUTION, FINALLY BY A SPECIAL LIGHT FROM HEAVEN SHE DETERMINES TO LEAD A SOLITARY LIFE IN HER OWN HOUSE. SHE DETACHES HERSELF FROM EVERY EARTHLY THING, AND TAKES LEAVE OF HER RELATIONS. HER PROPHECIES: AND A REMARKABLE OCCURRENCE THAT HAPPENED TO HER NIECE D. SEBASTIANA.

THE great retirement in which the Blessed Mary Ann lived, devoting herself entirely to

the exercise of the most heroic virtues, and above all the knowledge that she was already consecrated to God by the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, which constitute the religious state, induced D. Cosimo her brother-in-law and D. Girolama her sister to think she would be much pleased if they proposed to her to become an inmate of some monastery of virgins for the purpose of finishing her education, and afterwards should it be the will of Almighty God. make her religious profession. The servant of God was not at all opposed to it: on the contrary having contracted a friendship with the Mother Anna di S. Paolo, superioress of the monastery of St. Catherine, she one day asked her with much humility to be admitted for the present as a scholar, until she would discover by a heavenly light whether she was to consecrate herself irrevocably therein or not. This was the very thing these good Religious ladies desired, who had long known the extraordinary virtues of Mary Ann; and therefore having resolved that she should enter the monastery that very day, and as nothing was wanting but the consent of her brother-in-law D. Cosimo, they sent immediately in search of him

to the public square, where generally he was accustomed to amuse himself at that hour with other gentlemen. But in spite of all their messengers and the inquiries they made, he was not to be found: and the consequence was that not being able to conclude the affair, Mary Ann towards dusk returned home; and having afterwards related to D. Cosimo all that had taken place during the day, he was very much surprised, saying that he had never left the public square, nor could he understand why he had not been seen by some one of the many passengers, who went in search of him: and concluded, that it was perhaps a particular dispensation of the Almighty, who did not approve of the resolution she had taken.

After some months, D. Cosimo was the first to propose to his sister-in-law to become a Religious; and because some impediments had arisen to prevent her entrance among the Religious of St. Catherine, he suggested to her to become a nun in the convent of St. Clare. And Mary Ann having told him, that she would willingly enter that monastery, if such were the will of God, D. Cosimo not reflecting on the condition, but taking her answer as absolutely

affirmative, began immediately to prepare every thing requisite for her solemn entranee. The nuns were already informed of it, the relatives of the family and the nobility invited, the day fixed, and every thing arranged with much expense and pomp, as was befitting the rank and birth of the young lady. Mary Ann alone in the midst of all this preparation, contrary to her usual custom, remained cold and indifferent, as if the matter did not at all regard her. Recollecting that interiour voice she once heard on mount Picincia, by which it appeared to be the will of God, that she should lead a retired life in her own home, and no where else, she withdrew in silence to her room, and with many prayers and penances besought her divine Spouse to guide her in her deliberation and make known to her his divine will. She had not to wait long to receive the grace. We know not how; but it is certain, that she was so fully persuaded and convinced that she was not to lead a religious life in a monastery, but remain a secular in her own home, that not the smallest doubt or suspicion could exist of an illusion or deceit. Afterwards going to the church, Father Camaccio before hearing her confession, asked her

when she intended to enter the monastery. And she replied immediately with much firmness, that she could never enter. The Father wondered very much at this answer. "What do you tell me, never!" said he: "is not every thing prepared, and only a few days remaining before you enter?" And still it is so, she again replied in a firm voice: I will not enter, because my Spouse does not wish it. Mary Ann was always very guarded in speaking, especially of herself and her affairs: consequently her confessor hearing her reply with such assurance, quickly judged, that she had had some special inspiration from God, and ordered her on the spot to declare what it was. The servant of the Lord promptly obeyed, and opening her whole soul to him, told him frankly, what by the light of prayer, she had clearly discovered: and he was not only satisfied, but so convinced of the thing, that he took upon himself the task of speaking to D. Cosimo and D. Girolama, representing to them, that it was the express will of God, that Mary Ann should not shut herself up in a monastery, but lead a life of retirement in her own home.

It did not appear, to tell the truth, such an

easy matter to change in an instant the will and judgment of D. Cosimo, who, although he was a man of much virtue, was nevertheless naturally very sensitive and jealous of his honour. It was feared, therefore, that having already concluded the contract with the nuns, and pledged his word with the nobility, he would not be so easily induced to retrace his steps and undo what was already done at the expense of his reputation. Notwithstanding all this, as God directed every thing, so, by the Divine disposal, no difficulty or obstacle was met with on this point. Father Camaccio, accompanied by Father Anthony Monosalvas, who was afterwards also the confessor of Mary Ann, went to visit him, and in few words told him the occasion of their visit. And that it might more clearly appear that God directed the whole affair, the Father had no sooner concluded his discourse, than, as is recorded in the juridical process, D. Cosimo and D. Girolama threw themselves on their knees, and raising their hands to heaven, declared, "We neither wish nor desire aught than that the will of the Lord be done and accomplished in all things." And immediately, with great peace and tranquillity of mind, they gave

orders for the suspension of every thing, and after offering as a present to Mary Ann all that had been prepared for her entrance into the monastery, assigned her for her place of retirement, a certain apartment of the house divided into several rooms.

The Blessed Mary Ann rejoiced beyond measure to see the final accomplishment of her desires, distributed to the poor whatever had been given her as a present by her relatives, and sedulously set about preparing the suite of apartments in which God called her to lead a life truly extraordinary. And the first thing she did was to remove all the rich and sumptuous furniture from the rooms, retaining only a few chairs, a small table, and a miserable little bed, which she never used, but which served to hide her austerities from the eyes of others. She selected these and a few other pieces of furniture from among the meanest of the house, but they were all decent and clean; for, as she herself was all purity in soul and body, she abhorred every appearance of filth. Besides this, she supplied herself with every description of penitential instruments—hair-shirts, chains, disciplin s, crosses, and, moreover, a

coffin—for what use, we will see afterwards In the most private and secret corner she erected a little altar, that had more devotion about it than riches. and on it she placed the little statues of the Infant Jesus and the Blessed Virgin, which had been from her infancy the fondest objects of her love. Around the naked wall she hung many crosses, and the simple images of the saints, her patrons and advocates. Lastly, she ordered a lock to be fixed on the inside of her apartment, that could not be opened from without; having from the beginning resolved to admit no one, not even her nearest relatives, into her rooms.

With respect to dress, she absolutely laid aside every article that could be of ornament, and also those made of linen. For her under-dress she used a thick and common canvass, much used by the common country people, but so artfully made, that the few trimmings by which it was encircled, and which appeared around the neck, were of a somewhat better and finer texture, and thus none could see the haircloth that was next her person; her dress was a gown of black serge, much like that of the Fathers of the Society, without a collar, and open above and be-

low, which was fastened to her body with a belt from which hung the rosary of the Most Blessed Virgin; her head was covered with a large veil, likewise black, which, falling over her shoulders, covered her whole person as far as the feet, like a cloak. I find it recorded in the process, that she carried also on her breast the most holy name of Jesus, by which she always wished to be addressed, wrought in her dress. Hence it was that, as we find in the process, on account of her peculiar form of dress, and her constant attendance at the church of the Jesuits, she was commonly called *the Oblate of the Society:* but the truth is, she had no other intimacy with the Society but a great love and affection for it, as she had always been directed in spiritual matters by the members of the Society, and on account of her desire to conform, in as much as she could, to the rules of the Order, especially in those things which regarded her interiour.

Every thing being now arranged, and being on the point of shutting herself up, a voluntary recluse in her domestic solitude, Mary Ann wished to bid an affectionate farewell, first to her relatives, who were out of the house, then to the family itself, as if she were never more to

see them in this world. But the parting scene between her and her three nieces, with whom she had been brought up, was by far the most touching. Sending for them, she conducted them to a retired spot, and there, with many expressions of affection, told them of the resolution she had formed, and the new kind of solitary life, which, by the Divine appointment, she was about to commence; that every thing was now ready, and that nothing remained but to shut herself up in her voluntary retreat, which the charity of their parents had prepared for her; that she had therefore wished to see them first, and to bid them a lasting farewell; to thank them for their agreeable conversation and company, which she had enjoyed up to that hour, in her daily intercourse with them; and if, in the frequent communication they had had together, she had been an occasion of scandal, or bad example, to ask pardon and forgiveness of them; that she had seen nothing but what was praiseworthy in their conduct, which had always been extremely edifying, or in their morals, which had been, by the protection of God, innocent and pure—they should recollect, however, that the enemies of their salvation would never

cease to lay their snares and devices to divert them from the right path; that it was necessary to watch continually over themselves, and, armed by a holy fear of God, to maintain themselves firm and constant in the exercise of the virtues heretofore practised; they should take to heart solid piety and devotion, nourishing them by the frequentation of the holy sacraments, nor suffer themselves to be seduced by the follies of the world and vain hopes, which so many unfortunate youths place in the vigour of youth, beauty of person, and in the abundance of riches. Then, with her heart upon her lips, remembering the tender love she had always borne them, as to the companions from her childhood of her devotions, she begged them that they would never forget to recommend her often to the Lord. For the rest, that when she would be once shut up in her retirement, they should look upon Mary Ann from that day as dead; for such was the will of her Divine Spouse.

In saying this, and scarcely able to restrain her tears, on account of the interiour commotion experienced, she extended her arms to embrace them; but the children, surprised by the novelty of the thing, whilst Mary Ann was speak-

ing, had remained as it were astonished and out of themselves; scarcely had she finished, when they drew back, bursting into a flood of tears. They were inconsolable at the announcement of this bitter and unexpected separation; and therefore, after giving way for some little time to their sighs and tears, they humbly entreated their loving aunt to admit them all three into her solitude; and when they were told that such was not the will of God, seized with a new ardour, they offered to consecrate themselves, after her exemple, spouses of Jesus Christ by a perpetual vow of chastity. The saint was delighted to see so much fervour in her nieces; and at the same moment, being enlightened from above, and foreseeing what was to happen, told D. Giovanna that God did not wish that vow from her, having destined her for the state of matrimony, and then she distinctly pointed out to her the endowments and the qualities of the individual who would be her husband. Afterwards turning to the other two, D. Maria and D. Sebastiana, she exhorted them to be constant in their resolution, which God had graciously accepted; and to D. Sebastiana in particular, she added, that her virtue would be put to a

severe trial; that she must not on that account lose courage, and should it cost her her life, to preserve the promise and faith pledged to her Divine Spouse. And it came to pass just as she had predicted. D. Giovanna led an edifying life in the marriage state; and we shall speak of her several times in the course of this history, when we recount the singular favours she received from God through the intercession of Mary Ann, still living. D. Maria consecrated herself to God in a monastery of barefooted Carmelites, where, ripe in age and merits, she died in the odour of sanctity: she long survived the servant of God, and could consequently depose in the process to the wonderful things which she had seen with her own eyes, D. Sebastiana was still more fortunate, who obtained of God the happiness of dying rather than lose the flower of her virginity; and she had the privilege of having her blessed aunt to assist her in the last moments of her extraordinary death. The fact, although recorded in the process, escaped the notice of the first writer of Mary Ann's life; and I, in order not to transfer the recital of it to a more distant page, will give it here, where it suits my purpose.

D. Sebastiana being in her thirteenth or fourteenth year, and, moreover, desirous of following the example of her sainted aunt, with many prayers entreated her to admit her into her apartment, that they might there lead together a life entirely separated from the world, and united to God. At first Mary Ann refused to accede to her request; but afterwards, moved by the perseverance of her niece, who every day renewed her petition, finally consented, and gave her a room at a little distance from her own, in order that she might not discover the wonderful austerity she practised. D. Sebastiana, overjoyed to have obtained her object, took up her abode in the apartment of her aunt; and that she might never more be separated from her, by her counsel, and with the approbation of her confessor, she bound herself to God by a perpetual vow of chastity. Several years had passed since they began to lead together this angelical life, when, one day, the saint, in a conversation with her sister, D. Girolama, accidentally heard her say that Sebastiana had been betrothed to a young man as distinguished for his nobility as he was for his virtue. At which she was very much surprised,

and interrupted her. to tell her that she must take care what she did; that such certainly was not her daughter's intention, who had, several years previously, made a vow of chastity. D. Girolama, astonished also in her turn, was for some time lost in thought; after that, replied with much sorrow, that it was now too late; that not only had they pledged their word, and concluded the contract, but that the expenses had already been incurred, and every preparation made for solemnizing the marriage. Having heard this, Mary Ann immediately retired to her chamber, and having called her niece to her, "Do you know," said she, "that your parents have already disposed of you to an earthly man? Now what will you do, having promised to Jesus Christ to preserve your virginity unspotted?" The young girl, at this unexpected news, was dissolved in tears; then suddenly recovering herself, "Very well," she replied, "I shall ask my Divine Spouse to take me to himself, by removing me out of this life before the day appointed for the nuptials arrives." Mary Ann approved of her resolution, and exhorted her to implore this grace of God, as she was sure to obtain it: and both of them immediately knelt

down to pray. After their prayer was finished, she sent her niece to bed, who was taken, that very same night, with a very violent fever: wherefore, early next morning, the Saint went to her sister to tell her that Sebastiana was dangerously ill; that she should think of transferring her into her own room, and afterwards might give her a husband, if she wished. The physicians were quickly summoned, and every remedy was tried, but all to no purpose; for, instead of getting better, she gradually grew worse. In the meantime the servant of God asked her sister to have some fresh bunches of flowers brought; "because," said she, "we must begin to prepare for the funeral obsequies of Sebastiana." These words pierced D. Girolama to the heart, who, turning to Mary Ann, said, "You are determined, it seems, on the death of my daughter." She had, nevertheless, the flowers for which she had asked; and so entertained herself for several hours in the room of the invalid, talking of the happiness of heaven, and weaving together garlands, crowns, and festoons such as they are accustomed to strew on the corpses of deceased virgins. When their work was ended, the Saint stood up and spoke in

secret, for some time, to the invalid; after that, with much hilarity, taking leave of her sister, there present, "Good-by," said she, "I am going to leave Sebastiana in Paradise." To whom D. Girolama, deeply oppressed with grief, replied, "Go, my sister; you have already sent her there by express." Mary Ann left, to shut herself up in her retreat; and the invalid within an hour, without any sign of pain or agony, calmly expired. D. Girolama ran immediately, with her hair dishevelled, and weeping bitterly, to inform her sister; and having knocked several times at the door, and seeing she did not answer, nor open it, by pushing, she broke the bolt on the inside, and entering, found the servant of God on her knees, in an ecstacy, before her little altar, with her eyes raised to heaven, and perfectly motionless. She tried to recall her to herself by shaking her by the clothes, and calling her in a loud voice; but finding it useless, she went away, leaving her still in an ecstacy. A little after, Mary Ann came forth from her room, and, with her face inflamed, and every appearance of joy about her, meeting her sister, D. Girolama, "Oh, let us thank the Lord," said she; "Sebastiana is already in company

with her Divine Spouse: weep not, but rejoice that you have acquired a son-in-law of such a high and divine lineage: you have married your daughter to Jesus Christ for all eternity. Happy would we be, if we could now enjoy her lot!" Having said this, she retired again to her apartment, very much agitated in mind by her interiour emotions of affection. She wished afterwards to be present at the public and solemn obsequies which were performed for her niece in the Church of St. Francis, whither a great concourse of persons had assembled, drawn thither by the report of this wonderful occurrence, which quickly circulated all over the city, and the recollection of which continued for many years afterwards.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RIGID COURSE OF LIFE WHICH THE BLESSED MARY ANN COMMENCED TO LEAD IN HER RETIREMENT. THE ORDER AND DISTRIBUTION OF HER ACTIONS. THE INVENTIONS AND STRANGE CONTRIVANCES TO TORMENT HER BODY, AND THE HORRIBLE MANNER IN WHICH SHE TREATED IT. THE ARDENT DESIRE SHE HAD OF SHEDDING HER BLOOD FOR THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST: IT IS REWARDED BY ALMIGHTY GOD WITH WONDERFUL PRODIGIES.

To return to our history. When the Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus had bidden her last farewell to her relatives, her nieces, to every thing which belonged to the flesh and the world, she at length shut herself up in her long-wished for retreat. She was only in her twelfth year; and continued for about fourteen years—that is to say, to her death—to lead a solitary life, separated entirely from the world, and devoted exclusively to the contemplation of heavenly things, and the mortification of her innocent and virginal body.

I will proceed, taking each thing up successively, and place them distinctly before the reader; and first, I will relate that uncommon and extraordinary rigour which she practised in every kind of austerity and penance. To diminish the wonder, and I would almost say, the horror, which the sight of these corporal inflictions might naturally excite in us, considering that she who exercised them was one of unspotted innocence, and therefore had nothing to atone for, we must again remind the reader of what we said before, that God by many signs had clearly manifested his wish to conduct his servant by ways out of the usual course, and therefore had given her spirit and strength to support the enormous weight of the most terrible penances, which were far beyond the frailty of human nature to endure. Father Camaccio, her confessor, had often thought, from the first time he undertook the direction of her soul, to forbid her, under virtue of obedience, the practice of such cruel austerity towards herself; but he confessed that he had always been prevented, and that, guided by some secret inspiration, he had suddenly changed his mind; so that he could do no more than occasionally moderate

their rigour, especially in time of sickness. Her relatives also, being afraid that they would lose her in a short time, complained bitterly, and exhorted her to put bounds to her immoderate fervour, as it seemed to them; but afterwards, seeing there could be no doubt but that God concurred miraculously to support her, no longer dared to make any opposition.

For the purpose of exciting in herself that implacable hatred against her body, Mary Ann availed herself of the thought of death, which she had continually present. Among the other articles, with which her new apartment was provided, there was, as we said before, a coffin. It contained a wooden skeleton, dressed in the poor habit of a Franciscan, having for a head, a real human skull. It was exposed in the middle of the first room, with a small crucifix upon its breast, and with two candles, which were always kept burning. Before this lively image of death the blessed soul passed long hours in profound meditation, considering the shortness of life, the vanity of the things of the world, and the state to which she would be reduced after death: and hence she animated herself to greater fervour and contempt of herself. The medita-

tion being over, which was always new to her, she rose to her feet, and sprinkling the skeleton with holy water, she said, "May God forgive you, Mary Ann: which of the two will be your lot—death eternal, or life everlasting?" She repeated the same words every time she left or entered her apartment, and prayed those who very rarely came to visit her to do the same, telling them, that she was the dead person there exposed. At night she never went to take her brief repose, before sprinkling the skeleton with holy water, repeating always the same words. Besides this, she caused a small picture to be painted, representing the head of a young lady, one half of whose face was fresh, handsome and pleasing, and the other half disfigured, putrid, and full of vermin. She kept it suspended from the wall, near her own room; and in it, as in a mirror, contemplating the frailty of all exterior beauty, she drew fresh courage to beautify her soul every day with the garb of virtue, and to maltreat her body, which would one day be reduced to a mass of worms and corruption.

For many years she observed, with the greatest exactness, the order prescribed for the different actions of the day, in the distribution of

time which she gave to Father Camaccio, her first confessor. In it were assigned, counting the day and night, five hours for mental prayer, two disciplines, hair-shirts every day, and four hours only reserved for sleep. Her fervour increasing with her years, she sketched with her own hand another form of life, which, after it was approved of by Brother Ferdinand della Croce, her spiritual director, she continued to observe to her death. I shall faithfully transcribe it here, taking it from the juridical process, where it was inserted word for word; and it is as follows:—

"At four o'clock in the morning I will get up, and take the discipline, kneeling down, and I will return thanks to the Lord, and recall to mind the points of my meditation on the passion of Jesus Christ. From four o'clock to half-past five, mental prayer. From half-past five till six, reflection: I will put on my hair-shirts and recite the canonical hours as far as none; I will make my general and particular examens, and go to the church. From half-past six to seven, I will go to confession. From seven to eight, during the time of one mass, I will prepare the dwelling-place in my heart for the reception of

my Spouse. After receiving him, I will return thanks to the Eternal Father for having given me his Son, and offer him up to him, asking many graces in return. From eight to nine, I will pray to gain the indulgences for the souls in purgatory. From nine to ten, I will recite the five mysteries of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary. At ten, during the time of one mass, I will recommend myself to my patron saints; but on Sundays and Festivals, I will continue this exercise till eleven. After this, if I stand in need of it, I will take some refreshment. At two in the afternoon, I will recite vespers, and make the general and particular examen. From two to five, some manual labour, raising my heart to God, making frequent acts of love. From five to six, spiritual reading; and I will say complin. From six to nine, mental prayer, renewing the presence of God with more attention. From nine to ten, I will leave my room to go and get a glass of water, and take some little and allowable recreation. From ten to twelve, mental prayer. At midnight, the life of some saint, as my spiritual reading, for an hour; after that, I will say matins. From an hour after midnight to four o'clock, I will

take my repose, Fridays upon my cross, the other nights upon my ladder; and before going to take any rest, I will first take the discipline. In time of Advent and Lent, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, I will make my prayer from ten to twelve at night, on the cross. On Fridays, I will, moreover, place peas in my shoes, wear a crown made of thistles, and wrap a bandage, made of the same material, six times round my body; and I will fast the whole week, without tasting a morsel of any thing. On Sundays, I will take an ounce of bread; and every day communicate with the grace of God."

From this minute distribution of hours, every one sees that Mary Ann had not a moment of time left, that was not spent either in praising God, or mortifying herself. The routine of her life consisted in lengthy prayers, short and broken sleep, rigid fasts continued for whole weeks, frequent disciplines, daily hair-shirts, and other strange penitential contrivances. If we were not certain that in all this she was manifestly guided by the Spirit of God, we would be at a loss to discover how to excuse her of a want of moderation. And yet, she not only persevered constantly for so many years in

this rigorous course of life, without any abatement, except sometimes when commanded by her confessor, but so great was the insatiable desire which she had of suffering, that she often took occasion to add more and more to her austerities. A bit of paper was found after her death, on which she wrote thus to her confessor: "Father, should it please your Reverence to give me permission, I would like to increase the ordinary penances this Advent. I will use my cross every night from six to seven o'clock; and on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, put peas in my shoes. Take the discipline every night at eleven, one and four in the morning. Use bandages of thistles every day; and a rough covering, made of cords of bristles also, to macerate the arms and thighs, and a pointed iron chain with four rows of links, for the sides; and this, with the grace of God, from the Vigil of All Saints to Easter. As to my fasts. I will follow the rule which my spiritual Father left me, of taking food only when necessity compels. Father, let your Reverence determine whether or not I have to practise any of these things over and above what has been prescribed me. Let your Reverence consult his Divine Majesty,

who will suggest what is pleasing to him; meanwhile, I do not desire aught than that Mary Ann may be perfectly agreeable in the eyes of his Divine Majesty; and the Lord grant, that this be to his greater glory." This was signed with her own hand.

But to descend more to particulars in this matter. Mary Ann was in the habit. for many years, of scourging herself five times every day, counting day and night together; and she would have exceeded this number of times, had she not been restrained by her confessor. She used different sorts of instruments, such as small cords knotted together, or with little stars of steel attached to the end; chains, with hooks and iron points; little bundles of sharp and stinging grass. Her manner was without any moderation, or compassionate regard for herself; fervour, not time, was her regulator; and with such a strength of arm, that the walls and pavement around her were sprinkled with the blood from her mangled flesh. In order to conceal from the eyes of others the marks of blood which were every day increased, she would call her youngest nieces, and beg them to assist her to wash the walls and pavement with hot water.

But afterwards, being afraid that they come to know at last the true cause of so much blood being scattered about, she no longer availed herself of their assistance, but of some servants of the house, to whom she also secretly gave her blood-stained clothes to be washed.

Among these servants, there was one by the name of Catharine, who far surpassed all the rest in stupidity and rudeness. She had very little understanding, but was a simple, good-natured creature, and therefore just the one to suit Mary Ann's purposes, who proposed to make use of her, not only to conceal, but increase the rigours of her penance. Having called her one day to come to her, she put a discipline in her hand, asking her, for the love of God, to do her the favour of assisting her to scourge herself. Catharine, stupid as she was, refused at first to do it, saying that she could never be induced to strike her own mistress. But the other used so many reasons, prayers, and supplications, that at last, offering violence to her own feelings, she was persuaded to humour her, thinking she was doing her a favour. After this, Mary Ann took her every day to her room, and modestly uncovering her shoulders, submitted them to

Catharine's blows. When this had been done for some time, the good Indian one day, moved to pity, threw the discipline down, and asked her mistress leave to depart, as she had not courage to continue that cruel torture. But the servant of God, far from showing herself satisfied, became more earnest in her petitions to her to continue, without any regard for her; and when entreaties would not succeed, she had recourse to very ingenious arguments, telling her to be under no fear of doing her harm, as she perhaps believed. On the contrary, that by complying with her wishes, she would procure her the greatest possible good, by assisting her to acquire more merits in this life, and consequently to reach a higher degree of glory in paradise, where, once arrived, she would remember her as having been formerly the instrument and cause of such happiness. These reasons, urged by her in a suppliant and endearing manner, were sufficient to induce the obtuse Catharine to continue without mercy the cruel butchery, and to renew it every day, at the discretion and pleasure of her young mistress.

In consequence of this severe and continued ill-treatment, which Mary Ann either inflicted

on herself or by the hands of others, her shoulders were almost always covered with wounds: nor did she cease, therefore, to re-open and irritate the old wounds every day by fresh ones. And in order that all sense of pain might not be deadened by frequent repetition, in place of disciplines she substituted hair-cloths, which were like the bandages they use to dress incisions opened in the flesh by whips. More than thirty of these instruments of torture were found in her apartment after her death, and the whole of them were frightful to look at, both on account of the material, and the way they were made. Some of them were woven of rough bristles, others of sharp thistles, some, again, were like a coat of mail, studded with sharp iron points. There was no part of her body, we may say, to which she did not apply some special torture. For the head she had two crowns—one of thistles, and the other of iron, armed with sharp points; and she wore sometimes one, and sometimes the other, but in such a manner as not to be visible. For this purpose, when her head was shaved, she left in front two long locks of hair, and with them she strove to cover over and hide the crown from

the eyes of others. She was not, however, always successful; for the blood oozing from the wounds of her head, and trickling down her face, betrayed her. Thus, it happened, for instance, when her nieces and some ladies once entered her apartment to take her with them to church, she came out with her face covered with many and small drops of fresh blood, which ran from under her hair. The ladies, frightened at the sight, anxiously enquired the cause; and she, modestly blushing, without answering a word, immediately re-entered her chamber, and after effacing the spots, returned with a smiling countenance, as if nothing at all was the matter. She had also two instruments of torture made like a jacket with sleeves—one of rough bristles, the other of little cords, with points of iron; but this last she was not permitted to wear, except on Fridays, and on the vigils of the festivals of her patron saints, which were many in the course of the year Not unfrequently, she used to wear a dress likewise armed with sharp points, which extended from her neck almost down to her very feet. The pain which it caused her was intolerable, being unable either to move, sit, or kneel, with-

out being stung and pierced in every part of her body. Around her neck, and extending over her breast, she was accustomed sometimes to wind an iron chain studded with sharp points in four distinct folds. For her arms, besides the bandages mentioned before, she had two sleeves interwoven with sharp thistles; two little chains of iron for each arm, or little cords of bristles, which were tied so tightly round the flesh, that for a long time afterwards the arm remained so benumbed, that she lost all use of it. To torment her sides, she used not less than fifteen instruments of torture, of various forms, and all of the roughest description. Ten of them, although worn out, from the long use made of them, were taken away from her by her confessor, because they were too excessively painful. Finally, she covered the inside soles of her shoes with a coating of wax, and then inserted in it small stones, or dried peas; and these she used every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of the week, going and returning from her home to the church, and suffering, at every step, the most excruciating pains in the soles of her feet.

She could not certainly employ, at the same

time, all these dreadful instruments of penance; nevertheless, those of every day were such, and so numerous, that were we not certain that she was directed and supported in a special manner by God, who wished to give to the world in this his servant an admirable example of innocence and austerity, we could not excuse her of indiscretion and the height of excess. Catharine, the Indian servant, who had the best opportunity of knowing her, testified on oath, in the juridical process, that she was in the habit of using every day not less than nine of these instruments of torture, sometimes many, or all, at the same time, and again changing them in routine, in order to feel the pain more sensibly by the variety and change of torture. And Father Fra. Girolamo de Paredes, a Religious of the holy order of St. Francis, and brother to Mary Ann, was accustomed to say that his sister always carried about her person more than twenty pounds of iron; so many were the hair-shirts, the chains, big and little, and the other implements of penance with which, we may say, her whole body was bound and laced. And yet she was of a very weak and delicate constitution, and often afflicted with severe and painful

diseases, which, especially in the last eight years of her life, were accompanied with the most acute pains. Notwithstanding all this, she never abated the smallest particle of her daily austerities, except when she was obliged to take to her bed, or compelled, by order of her confessor.

Besides her ordinary mortifications, she had her extraordinary ones for certain days and times; which only her ardent and never-satiated love of suffering could have suggested to her mind. Being tenderly devoted, as she was, to the passion of Jesus Christ, she studied by all means possible to copy in herself the dreadful pains and sufferings which the Redeemer underwent whilst here on earth for our salvation. Not content with what she had undertaken to do from her childhood upon every Friday of the year—which day was consecrated in a special manner to the memory of the passion of Christ, and which we have already related—from the time she began to lead a solitary life, she gave full scope to her fervour and love, adding other unusual and painful austerities. She caused a huge cross of wood to be made, and fastened at the extremities of its arms and foot a certain number of loops, something like handcuffs,

formed of cords made of very rough and slender bristles; and having fastened it securely to the wall, she crucified herself upon it every Friday of the year. Having first put on the crown of iron armed with sharp points, she approached the cross with the greatest reverence, and getting upon a little stool, she first fastened the few locks of hair, which we mentioned she had left on the front part of her head to conceal the crown, to some little cords hanging from the top of the cross; after this, with considerable difficulty, she inserted first the hands, and then the feet, into the loops of thistle bristles, and pushing away the stool from under her feet, she remained suspended, with the whole weight of her body supported by these five bands, and in this state she continued two and three hours at a time, absorbed in God, and meditating the passion of her heavenly Spouse. Afterwards, in time of Lent and Advent, besides Fridays, she placed herself upon the cross also on Mondays and Wednesdays; and very often on Saturdays, to commemorate the dolours of the Most Blessed Virgin. What is more, whilst she hung thus suspended, she entreated her servant Catharine, as a great favour, to press hard upon

and force down the crown; and the consequence was, her head became, as it were, one wound, and the bristles encircling the ancles and wrists being drawn tighter, broke the skin, and tore the flesh. Her strength was completely exhausted under this dreadful torture, and as her servant Catharine attested, she was unable to move, much less to stand upon her feet, for many hours afterwards.

But the more she suffered, the more she always desired to suffer to become more and more conformable to the image of her crucified Saviour. She would have wished to give her life and blood in testimony and token of her love; and therefore not being satisfied with lacerating her flesh with so many instruments of penance, once a week, and if she could, on Fridays, under pretence that her frequent maladies required it, she caused them to open a vein and bleed her. But whatever pretence she alleged, those of the house knew very well, that it was nothing else than a desire of shedding her blood for Jesus Christ. Nor could she herself, although very cautious and guarded, on more occasions than one conceal it, the joy and delight which she felt were visible upon her face. It happened on one

occasion when the surgeon had performed the operation, and was about closing the vein by bandaging the arm, Mary Ann being suddenly seized by one of those transports of love, with which her soul was inflamed, drawing back her arm, begged him to allow her ignoble and worthless blood to flow, since Jesus Christ, her spouse, had shed his own most precious blood in much greater quantity for such a miserable sinner as she was. When afterwards this occurred on Good-Friday, the joy she felt was indescribable. Having been attacked one year by a fever on that day, the attending physician ordered her to be bled. The announcement visibly affected her, and, unable to restrain the ardour of her joy, she exclaimed—let infinite thanks be given to God, who has deigned to allow me on this day to shed a small quantity of blood. The fact would be incredible, were it not certified in the process by several ocular witnesses and persons of standing: viz., that in little over a year she was bled one hundred and sixty times. The family marvelled, and the physicians and surgeons were still more astonished; and they declared, that, according to the laws of nature, it was impossible, considering

the scantiness of the diet which Mary Ann, as we saw, was accustomed to take every eight or fifteen days, such an abundance of blood should be produced.

And that God really was the agent here, was plainly to be seen from many signs and prodi gies. Martino della Pegna, a learned physician and a man of known probity, made an agreement with Mary Ann, that he would cure in her the maladies which afflicted her body, provided she would obtain of Almighty God, by her prayers, a cure for a depression of spirits under which he laboured. Having obtained the favour for which he had asked, it cannot be expressed with what care and solicitude he applied himself to her every want. Having paid her a visit one day, and it was the Good-Friday of 1645, he found her with such a burning fever that he judged it necessary for her to be bled; and without waiting for a surgeon, he himself, on the spot, opened a vein. But what was his surprise, when he saw a thin stream of clear and limpid water first spirt from the incision, and then after some time fresh blood follow? As tonished at the novelty of the thing, he could not refrain from saying, Miss, such a thing as

this never happened except in the side of the Redeemer. Mary Ann made him no answer; and only a modest blush suffused her face. When the vein was closed, a small fleshy excrescence was formed in the scar, which protruded like the head of a nail; and it lasted till her death, causing her a severe pain, as if something sharp was always piercing her arm in that particular spot. D. Maria della Rosa was present, together with several other ladies, and having a great opinion of Mary Ann's sanctity, unseen by any one, dipped her linen handkerchief in the blood, which seemed to her miraculous, and when she was returned to her own home, wished to see it; but to her great surprise, she perceived her handkerchief just as white and clean as when it first came from the wash.

The blessed servant of God having discovered that some persons sought after her blood to preserve it, gave orders to her Indian servant, Catharine, that whenever she was bled she should throw the blood in the garden attached to the house, that the earth might absorb every trace of it. The servant complied in part with her orders, but not entirely; because having dug a little hole in a distant and less frequented

corner, she regularly deposited in it her mistress' blood, and then closed the mouth of the hole with a stone. After some time her curiosity was excited to know how it was preserved there; and with a little stick in her hand she began to stir the blood in the hole, and found it as fresh and uncorrupt as if it had just been extracted from the vein. Surprised at this, and hardly believing her own eyes, she returned very often, and at different times and years, to try the same experiment, and always found the blood perfectly pure; wherefore full of wonder, she could not refrain from telling her mistress of it, with her usual simplicity, who gave her no other answer than these words: "Blessed be the Lord; that the blood of Mary Ann, a sinner, remains without being corrupted. This prodigy continued till after Mary Ann's death: or rather God then confirmed it by another more singular and remarkable prodigy, which we will give in its proper place.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EXTRAORDINARY RIGOUR PRACTISED BY THE BLESSED MARY ANN, IN THE SHORT SLEEP WHICH SHE TOOK DURING THE NIGHT. DESCRIPTION OF HER ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY BEDS. HER WONDERFUL ABSTINENCE FROM EVERY KIND OF FOOD, PROLONGED FROM EIGHT TO FIFTEEN DAYS IN SUCCESSION, AND RENDERED MORE PAINFUL BY AN HEROIC EXERCISE OF MORTIFICATION.

This did not put an end to the evil treatment with which this fervent virgin afflicted her innocent body during the whole course of her life. Besides the torments which we have already recounted, she added this of inflicting pain upon herself during the night, curtailing her repose, and by a thousand artifices and inventions, and depriving herself of every necessary sustenance by a strict fast prolonged for days and weeks.

And in the first place, as regards her sleep, she had assigned in her distribution of time but three hours of the night; and she gradually diminished it afterwards so much, that, as Father

Camaccio her confessor attested, she reduced to one hour only. But I am at a loss to say whether that brief space of time, which she gave from necessity to repose, strictly speaking, deserves the name of sleep, and not rather that of a prolonged torture. She had in one of her rooms a little bed, poor it is true, but neat and kept in good order, which served only for the purpose of concealing her rigid austerities from the eyes of others. She never used it unless when compelled by obedience of her confessor, or in case only of severe indisposition. The ordinary bed, however, on which she lay was a ladder of a triangular form, with the bars not rounded, but made rough, shapeless and pointed. One evening her Indian servant, Catharine, being left alone in her room, chanced to see this strange bed, which had been drawn out from its place of concealment, where her mistress generally kept it during the day, and which now stood prepared for use in her room; and wishing to know with what convenience one could lie upon it, stretched herself upon it at full length. In this position Mary Ann unexpectedly surprised her, and with a sweet smile said to her—"Ah, well—is my bed soft and nice enough for

you?" To whom the servant, with her usual simplicity, replied—"It is a real instrument of torture, and my bones are already aching, although I was on it only for a moment: and you, my Lady, can you really sleep upon this dreadful rack?" "Yes," "replied the servant of God, "I sleep upon it; I tell you, moreover, that this is one of Mary Ann's delights. We have to do and suffer some little thing in order to merit and gain heaven: and when I consider the immensity that my Divine Spouse has done and suffered for me, what I do and suffer for him appears to me as nothing."

But this ladder caused her no little suffering during the whole course of her life. To D. Giovanna, her niece, to whom her confessor once obliged her to give an account of her interiour, she candidly confessed, that of an evening, when she was about to extend herself upon the ladder, her heart was so oppressed, and she felt such a repugnance and horror, that not unfrequently she fell into violent swoons and deadly sweats. At the thought alone, that upon that hard bed she would never be able to close an eye, and that she would rise from it with her body all bruised and pained, and this not for one or two

nights, but for the rest of her days, as long as she had health and strength, she said she felt, every time, as if she were seized by the agonies of death; so great was the repugnance of the flesh to the spirit. Notwithstanding all this, rather than succumb or yield an inch to her feelings, she became more generous and courageous to blunt her every emotion of natural repugnance. The more she felt herself assailed by it, the more violently she threw herself upon that pile of wood, and rolling herself upon it with the whole weight of her body, she spoke in a loud voice to herself, "Aha, Mary Ann, do you feel uneasiness and pain upon this bed? Complain as much as you please: your Spouse has suffered much more than you. Have you a feeling of pain and torment? Enjoy it a thousand times: you have deserved greater chastisements for your sins." Nor was she yet satisfied: after having been for some time upon the ladder, she got up and wrapt herself in a kind of thick mat made of bristles, and shaped like a bag, the inside of which was filled with small sharp and cutting stones, and continuing to talk to her afflicted body, she said to it, "Be quiet now, and comfort yourself: you were anxious

to enjoy delights, ease, and soft linen; and here is every thing together, in this covering sheet, which the nicest art can invent for your convenience. Wrap yourself well up in it, enjoy its softness, and take your pleasure till you are satisfied in the convenience of the bed which you desire." In this manner did this innocent and delicate young girl punish in herself as faults the repugnance which was but natural. Let so many delicate and effeminate young ladies look upon this model and example, and be confounded, who cannot suffer the roughness of a dress, the puncture of a needle, and whose whole time and attention is taken up in pampering and caressing their body, although always opposed and rebellious to the spirit, and in shunning the slightest suffering and the most trifling mortification. And yet, without this, it is very difficult to keep the passions in subjection, and to remove the obstacles and dangers which are to be met with in the way of salvation. But let us return to Mary Ann.

We have seen what was her ordinary bed. She had also extraordinary ones, for certain times; casting herself, often in the depth of winter, to sleep upon the bare ground, with a

rough piece of wood, or a hard stone, under her head for a pillow, and stretching herself upon a most curious instrument of torture of her own invention, which was transferred, after her death, to the College of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, where it is preserved with the greatest veneration. This was a log of wood sufficiently large and of a round form, into which she fastened one hundred and seven of the sharpest kind of thorns, at an equal distance from each other, in such a manner, that in what position soever the servant of God would lie, she was sure to have her flesh cruelly pierced on every side. She generally lay on this piece of torture every Friday of the year, after having first suffered a martyrdom on the other, which was erect and standing against the wall, which we have already described. At other times, carried away by the violence of her fervour, she would run to embrace and press it to her bosom, tearing her breast with the thorns, and covering the log with the blood which flowed from the wounds, and which, for many years after her death, remained as fresh and as red as ever.

She used also to go and sleep in the coffin which she kept in her apartment, after deposit-

ing the skeleton on the ground; as also to extend herself, naked, upon a bed made of the stems of nettles. This she called her soft and delicious bed; and such it was in reality for the soul, for which sufferings, both interior as well as exterior, were a solace; but not so for the body, which left that bed of thorns all pierced and bloody—for in that part of South America, the nettles are not, as with us, a small delicate little plant with a slender stem, but they grow to a great height, and have long and solid trunks, as thick as a man's fist, which shoot out strong and long thorns all over them. There was one of her more trusted servants, who, from time to time, as she received orders, purchased these plants, and after stripping them of their leaves, brought by night the naked and thorny stems into Mary Ann's rooms, who afterwards arranged and fixed them to suit herself. And she was just precisely preparing, one evening, this dreadful bed of torture, when, believing she was not heard by any one, she began to talk to herself in a loud voice, "Well, does Mary Ann, then, wish to sleep upon a soft and convenient bed? Very well. I'll give her the bed which she deserves." Catharine, the Indian

servant, was in the next room, who, hearing her mistress talk in this manner, immediately guessed what it was. But, without this, she discovered it many times the next morning, when, being obliged, according to the agreement with Mary Ann, secretly to carry away these things and bury them under ground in the domestic garden, she found them all crushed and besmeared with blood.

Nor was the abstinence less wonderful and out of the usual course of nature, which the Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus practised during the whole term of her mortal career. All the witnesses who testified in the different processes, agreed in saying, that God, by a continued miracle, preserved the life of his servant for more than twenty-six years; it being impossible that nature could, without the aid of supernatural help, support herself, I will not say for a year, nor a month, but a few days only, on such slight and scanty nourishment, which might be called rather the appearance than a substantial food. We have seen how, whilst she was still in her infancy, and a little girl of but few years, she began to fast with such rigour that frequently she would fall into mortal swoons and

fainting fits from extreme weakness; extending her fasts to twenty-four hours at a time, without tasting a morsel of bread. Nor did she relax any thing of her fasts as she advanced in years: on the contrary, she was always curtailing and reducing her allowance of food. She had hardly attained the use of reason when she abstained altogether from flesh, and not long after also from any thing composed either of milk or eggs, and from fish, and from every other kind of food that was any ways substantial or delicate. And in this she was so constant and firm, then even in her severe attacks of illness, it was not possible to induce her to taste any other food; the Almighty concurring in a wonderful manner to render every other food not only disagreeable to the taste, but injurious to the stomach, except what was her ordinary and common diet. Her confessors very often commanded her to break this law of rigorous fast in the quality as well as the quantity of her food: and she, perfectly obedient to their wish, acquired the full merit of obedience, although at the cost of unspeakable suffering, for she was never able to retain upon her stomach or derive any sustenance from the foods prescribed her: the conse-

quence was, they had to revoke the order, in order not to aggravate her pains and afflictions, and endanger her life.

One time when she was sick, Father Monosalvas of the Society of Jesus, who was at that time her confessor, went to visit her. He found her very emaciated and feeble; and believing this arose from a want of proper nourishment, ordered her, on the spot, to take three fresh eggs. The Blessed Mary Ann, with the true spirit of interiour submission, suppressing every natural repugnance, without offering a word of excuse, in the presence of the Father, took the eggs, and with an heroic act of resignation swallowed them down, although she foresaw the excruciating torture which they would undoubtedly cause her. It seemed, however, that this time she would be able to retain them, and that they would do her good; for after having swallowed them she remained perfectly quiet and calm: and Father Monosalvas returned to the college, well pleased that he had been so successful in making her take that little nourishment with such happy result. But he had hardly set his foot outside the house before the servant of God was immediately seized with violent

convulsions and dreadful contortions in her stomach, which, for three successive days, allowed her not a moment of rest or repose. She could without doubt easily have rid herself of her misery by discharging at once the food from her stomach, which she was unable to digest, but for fear of being wanting in obedience she preferred to suffer with invincible constancy this lengthy torment. At the end of three days her confessor returned to pay her another visit; and having asked her about the state of her health, she told him plainly of the great sufferings she had endured during his absence, and humbly asked his permission to vomit. Having obtained it, she immediately threw up the yolks of the three eggs as sound and entire as she had taken them three days before, to the astonishment of all present, who could not observe the slightest change produced on them by the action of the stomach during all that time.

Another time a plain cup of chocolate was presented to her by a lady, an intimate friend. She at first very politely declined it; but being pressed and importuned with many entreaties and prayers, was at length induced to take a few sips. And behold, at that very instant she

is assailed with acute pains in her bowels and violent contortions in her stomach, from which she is only relieved after throwing up with much suffering the little nourishment she tasted. More singular still is the fact, which I will here relate, copying it faithfully from the process. D. Sebastiana di Casso and Catharine, the Indian servant, both of whom lodged in Mary Ann's apartments, made an agreement one day together that they would secretly prepare a dish a little better seasoned: and that the servant of God might have no pretext for refusing it, they neither used flesh, fish nor milk in its composition. They then made a savoury ragout, composed entirely of common and ordinary herbs; but with such precaution that it was the same in appearance and smell as the ordinary food the Saint was accustomed to take. The simple Indian, however, could not refrain from telling her mistress that D. Sebastiana had that day wished to prepare the food for her. To whom Mary Ann smiling replied—"I am very much obliged to her for her charity; but I foresee that she will make it such that I shall not be able to taste it." Catharine assured her that the food was perfectly Lenten, and that it contained

nothing of those things which she refused. "And yet," added the other, "you will see that I shall not be able to take it." Both of them came together, at the usual hour, into Mary Ann's room, and set before her the dish of herbs. But she had no sooner seen it than pushing it from her with horror—"Did I not tell you," she exclaimed, "that your labour would be useless? Why do you wish that I should eat meat to-day, when you know, that both on account of the law of abstinence, and the weakness of my stomach, I cannot taste of such foods?" At these words the two women looked at each other, perfectly bewildered, and lost in amazement at the novelty of the prodigy, by which, at that very instant, the herbs were converted into flesh, and were unable to utter a word. From this they were finally convinced, that it was the will of Almighty God she should never change in the least her way of abstinence: and the consequence was, that neither they nor any of the house, not even her confessors themselves, ever afterwards, dared to solicit her to moderate any thing of her rigour.

Even from her tender years, her whole diet consisted of a very small quantity of cabbage boiled simply in water, and without any season-

iug, not even salt. When she was eight years of age, she deprived herself also of this; satisfied to support herself on a little bread and water. She fasted rigorously three days in the week, and on all the vigils of the Most Blessed Virgin and her patron saints. Besides the ordinary Lent prescribed by the Church, which she called the Fast of the Holy Passion, she added two others of much longer duration—one from Easter to Pentecost, called also, by her, the Glorious Fast; and the third, from the vigil of All Saints to the solemnity of Christmas. During all this time she took but a limited allowance of bread and water, and this only once a day. When she had completed her eleventh year, she carried her abstinence so far as to pass four entire days, from the Wednesday of Holy Week to noon of Easter Sunday, without food or drink. Thenceforward, as if all her abstinence heretofore had been but experiments of childish fervour, she fasted so vigorously, that, as we find it recorded in the juridical process, she only took food every fifteen days, and then but a small slice of bread, which her stomach again rejected, after retaining it a short time. Such was her way of living for

many years; until, on account of her severe indispositions, she was compelled by her confessor to take more frequent nourishment. From this time she was induced to break her fast every eight days, but she never took any thing but a small slice of bread, which never amounted to more than an ounce. D. Scolastica Sarmiento testified to having seen in Mary Ann's rooms several of those little cakes which they are accustomed to bless on the Feast of St. Nicholas, and that they were so small, that, perhaps, the whole of them together would hardly weigh a single ounce. A single one of these, was the only nourishment she took every eight days. So that, during the whole time of Lent, she was not accustomed to eat but six ounces of bread, and four in Advent—that is to say, an ounce every Sunday; and with this scanty allowance she not unfrequently mixed, for her greater mortification, ashes, or gall, and sometimes bitter herbs, to render it as unpleasant as possible to the taste. It was to be feared, moreover, that her throat would become so contracted from the want of moisture, that her life was endangered from suffocation, and then she was obliged to remedy the evil by sipping water, or

keeping in her mouth a small piece of quince and gradually extracting its juice. Finally, in the last years of her life, it can be said in all truth, that she derived no support whatever from natural food, because even that small particle of food, which she took every eight days, and the juice of the quince, which she swallowed once in every eighteen or twenty days, she was unable to retain on her stomach, but soon rejected, almost as soon as she took it.

In order to render her extraordinary abstinence still more painful, and to stifle with heroic mortification every temptation to gluttony, she was in the habit, as long as she was in good health, of serving her relations at table, and in this manner, by the sight of the dainty dishes before her, to make her own want more keenly sensible. At first, her brother-in-law and sister were strongly opposed to it, for their hearts could not endure the sight of that little angel acting the part of a servant every day at table. But she begged so hard, and brought forward so many reasons, that at last, for fear of giving her pain, they dared not longer oppose her. After some time, however, there was not one of the family who was not displeased that

such a thing should be tolerated; for which reason, D. Cosimo hit upon the expedient of changing every day the hour of dining, thinking, by this means, to escape the vigilance of Mary Ann. But it was all useless; for no sooner had they sat down to table, than Mary Ann always made her appearance with a smile upon her face, and ready to discharge her humble office. It would frequently happen that her sister, or some one of the guests, who were aware of her abstinence, would offer her something to eat; but it was never possible to induce her to taste even so much as a mouthful, and she knew how to excuse herself in such cases with such a good grace, and with so much civility in her words and manner, that she gained the love and veneration of all present. She wished, however, that her portion should be preserved untouched; but it was only that she might relieve, with it, a poor Indian woman, whom she charitably supplied every day with food. When dinner was over, and there was nothing more to be done, she suggested some pious sentiment to the guests, and then, taking her departure, retired to her solitude, leaving all present edified with her humility and mortification

The fame of Mary Ann's extraordinary abstinence being spread over the city, every one was loud in praise of her wonderful sanctity. There was no condition or class of persons that were not of opinion that her rigid course of life was more than natural, and that God undoubtedly concurred to support her with virtue more than human. The more, as every one remembered the frequent and cruel disciplines she took, the continual and horrible hair-cloths she always bore about her person, the daily loss of so much blood occasioned by bloody disciplines, or the punctures of iron chains and thorns, or drawn by the surgeon, her short and unpleasant sleep, so many years spent without the enjoyment of any solace or recreation, as also her long prayers and meditations on her knees, and the continual guard she kept over her senses, the contradictions she always offered to her own will, they were at a loss to understand how a small slice of bread and a few sips of water, taken so sparingly and afterwards rejected, could naturally afford that amount of strength as would be required not to sink, irreparably oppressed and overcome, under the weight of such austerity, as would have been insupport-

able to a man of the strongest and most robust constitution, but much more so to a delicate girl, and one so young, of a noble family, of a very feeble constitution, and almost always sick.

It is almost inconceivable how insupportable to the humility of the servant of God were the opinion and praises of men. She would have wished that none knew or spoke of her; and consequently she made use of every art and exertion to hide her fasts from the eyes of others, even at the cost of great inconveniences and sufferings. One of the principal ladies of the city, giving little credit to the general belief that was current of the extraordinary abstinence of Mary Ann, wished to be convinced of it with her own eyes, and therefore having gone one morning to pay her a visit, took the liberty to tell her that she would remain and dine with her. The Saint, in the kindest manner, expressed her happiness to have her company, and suspecting perhaps the cause, gave orders to have her table well supplied that day, and eat herself of several dishes. But no sooner was the lady gone, than she had to discharge from her stomach, with much pain, every thing she had taken. At other times she would order her

servant Catharine to make her some nice and delicate dishes, and afterwards make her carry them, openly and in sight of every body, into her apartment. She hoped by this to make the family and strangers believe she occasionally indulged in better diet. But the Indian, with her usual simplicity, betrayed her; for as much as she was distinguished for her obedience, so much the more solicitous she was to disclose to others that her mistress, without tasting the dishes that were brought her, gave the whole of them to the poor.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLESSED MARY ANN, AFTER BEING REDUCED TO THE LAST DEGREE OF ATTENUATION BY THE RIGOUR OF HER FASTS, IS INSTANTANEOUSLY RESTORED TO HER USUAL APPEARANCE AND STRENGTH, WHICH MIRACULOUSLY CONTINUES TO HER DEATH. PROOFS OF HER BEING SUPPORTED FOR MANY YEARS ON DAILY COMMUNION ALONE. HER TENDER DEVOTION TO THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

But what afflicted the blessed child most, was the extenuation and meagerness to which, from the beginning, she was reduced. Her face was pale and without colour, every member of her body emaciated and withered, so that she had more the appearance of a skeleton, covered with a thin skin, than a real and sound body. This exteriour appearance, which it was impossible to conceal, gave her no little uneasiness, as it betrayed to every body's eyes the natural effects of her excessive rigours. Besides, her sister and brother-in-law being much concerned at the

thought of losing her forever, had, for a long time past, used argument and entreaties to induce her to abate something of that excessive abstemiousness, which had exhausted her strength and attenuated her body. And when they saw they lost their time in endeavouring to make her alter her resolution, they applied to Father John Camaccio, that he would use his authority as confessor, and oblige her in virtue of obedience to change her way of life, and save herself from certain death. He, although he had been inspired by Almighty God to approve her way of living, yet afterwards seeing that without an evident miracle, she would not be able to hold out much longer, was also inclined to revoke or suspend the permission given her.

Things having reached this state, Mary Ann found herself in the greatest perplexity and agitation of mind. She had the clearest conviction by light infused into her mind from above, that the manner of her penance was pleasing to her Divine Spouse; and in this she was certain of not going astray. But on the other side her excessive paleness and leanness was the cause of considerable anxiety to her, as it would afford an occasion to the family of frequently renewing

their entreaties, and importuning her confessor to forbid her every extraordinary rigour, and would be also to strangers a reason and argument of thinking her a very mortified and penetential person, which to her humility was insupportable. Not knowing then what to do, she shut herself up in her rooms, and redoubling her prayers for many days, she prayed her heavenly Spouse that he would grant her the special grace of leading a life in perfect conformity with his most holy will, yet without any exteriour show, wishing to live entirely unknown to the eyes of men. After praying in this manner with many tears, she felt an interiour voice which told her that her prayer was heard. She went early the next morning to the church of the Jesuits, and having sent for Father Camaccis, she told him that he should suspend his judgment for a little while in regard to her fasts: that he should, before resolving, consult more earnestly the will of Almighty God: that he should say the mass of the Holy Ghost for her that very morning, and implore light from heaven. The Father after hearing this went immediately to celebrate, and Mary Ann communicated with extraordinary fervour; then after

spending some considerable time in thanksgiving, she returned to the confessional to speak again to her director, and she had scarcely got on her knees before she was overpowered by a sweet sleep, something like an exstacy. A little after she returned to her senses and perceived herself suddenly quite an altered person. She was no longer pale and meagre, but florid and gay; her hands no longer dry and emaciated, but full and fleshy; her face fresh and rosy; her whole air and appearance were so exceedingly beautiful and resplendent, that she seemed like an angel just descended from heaven. The servant of God was herself sensible of the sudden change; and therefore turning to her confessor, "I believe, Father," said she, "there can be no longer a doubt as to the divine will." Father Camaccio was perfectly-astonished at the miraculous change; and adoring the admirable dispensation of Almighty God, comforted Mary Ann, and exhorted her to continue the way of life she had began. Her relations also, as soon as they perceived the change wrought in her countenance, and that air of angelic beauty, which modestly shone in her face, congratulated themselves believing that she had at

last been induced to moderate somewhat the excessive rigour of her penances, especially in regard of fasting. But in the course of time, observing that she continued to mortify her body as she was previously accustomed to do, and to pass whole weeks without any nourishment, and yet always maintained the same state of florid health, which could not be impaired, even in appearance, by long sicknesses, to which she was subject, nor death itself, they reasonably suspected that this must be some supernatural or miraculous interposition of divine providence.

In proof of this also, there was another prodigy, not as visible as the first to the exteriour eye, but still equally certain and no less extraordinary. All who gave testimony in the different processes, either as eye-witnesses or who spoke to their own certain knowledge of Mary Ann's fasts, all without exception agreed in affirming, that by a special favour of Almighty God she lived for many years, and was entirely supported by that heavenly and spiritual food, which she received every day in holy communion, having no longer any need of material or earthly food. It was without doubt the same

singular and extraordinary grace that was formerly conferred on St. Catharine of Sienna, St. Rose of Lima, and several other favoured souls, to whom Almighty God wished to assimilate the Blessed Mary Ann, in the gratuitous distribution of supernatural gifts, as she had closely resembled them in the innocence and austerity of her life.

That she really lived on holy communion, the testimony of Fathers John Camaccio, Antonio Monosalvas, and Alfoso Roxas, who, from having been her confessors, were acquainted with her every action, even the most insignificant, although hidden and interiour, leaves no room for doubt. At the time that sudden storm of contradictions was excited against the servant of God, on account of her daily communion, which we have described in another place. among the other reasons which Father Camaccio brought forward in her defence before the Bishop of Quito and the theologians deputed to discuss and define the question, one was this: that to forbid frequent communion to Mary Ann, would be the same as to deny her the only sustenance on which she lived. And that he said the truth was also observable in the effects

which were remarked by her relatives and those belonging to the house. For having been forbidden to approach the holy table whilst the matter was being discussed, Mary Ann became subject to great weakness and deadly swoons, and had hardly strength enough to stand upon her feet, which she immediately afterwards recovered as soon as she was allowed to receive every day. In the last years of her life it was so evident that the Eucharistic bread was her only food, that every one believed it, and it had ceased to be a matter of surprise.

It pleased Almighty God, that Mary Ann herself should, on more occasions than one, be unable to dissemble or deny this singular favour granted her by a special grace of heaven. One day she exhorted her Indian servant Catharine to fast on bread and water, for the love of Jesus: and the other replying "that she would do so willingly, if she were a Saint like herself;" "do what you can on your part," added the servant of the Lord, "and God will not be wanting with his assistance to give you health and strength to do it." The good servant smiled to hear her talk so; and I "began," she said, in her deposition, "to fast the best I could, but I could

never equal my mistress." At another time the same Catharine, wondering very much at her great abstinence, took the liberty to ask Mary Ann "how in the world she managed to live, as she could not retain the little nourishment which she took every eight days, but had always almost immediately to reject it again?" Mary Ann, with a smile, told her that "every morning, when she left the house, she went to eat a live lamb, whole and entire, and of course she had no need of other food." The poor simple woman did not question the truth of what she said, nor understand the meaning of her words: rather considering, in her own mind, the answer of her mistress, resolved to keep watch and see in what place and what hour the victuals were secretly prepared. To carry out her plan, she got up very early for several days, and closely followed Mary Ann when she issued forth at day-break: and observing that the only way she took was to the church of the Jesuits, she came at length to the conclusion that the entire and living lamb, on which she fed, was the divine Sacrament of the Eucharist, which she received every day.

More explicit still was the declaration which

the Saint made to Petronilla of St. Byruns, a lady of exalted piety and her confident, and who afterwards became a nun in the monastery of St. Clare.* This lady having heard many persons say that Mary Ann of Jesus lived on communion alone, took the liberty which, that intimate friendship which existed between them gave her, to turn the conversation, when they were talking together one day on heavenly things, purposely on the most Blessed Sacrament, and then plainly asked the servant of God if such really were the effects which that divine food produced in her: and she pressed and urged her with so many questions and prayers, that at length the other being overcome by her entreaties, candidly confessed that she no longer needed natural food; that the holy Eucharist was sufficient to support her life.

I will further add, that sometimes not only communion, but the very hope of soon receiving it was enough for Mary Ann to cure her perfectly of severe and dangerous corporal infirmities; and in proof of it I will relate a wonderful fact, which I find recorded in the process. Father John Camaccio having left the city of Quito, she took Father Antonio Monosalvas for her

confessor. This Father, who from not being yet acquainted with her virtue, had been one amongst the most strenuous opposers of daily communion, no sooner saw her at his feet than he forbade her to communicate the next day, as she had desired and asked, it being the vigil of St. John the Baptist, to whom she was very devout. The humble servant of the Lord obeyed without reply; but she was hardly returned home, before she was assailed that very day with a malignant fever, and accompanied with such violence that the physicians, with all their skill, could give her no relief, and in a short time she was brought almost to death's door. As soon as Father Monosalvas heard of it, he went immediately to visit her, and fearing the beginning of the disorder was no other than his refusal to allow her to communicate when going away, consoled her by telling her that he expected her the next morning in church, where she would be able to receive the bread of angels. That was enough, for Mary Ann recovered immediately her health and strength. At the first dawn of day she left the house, and so eager was she to go to church, that she had to wait some time outside the door till the church

was opened. Her confessor could scarcely believe his eyes when he first saw her, and asked her if it were her great desire of communicating that induced her to expose herself in that manner, and come at such an early hour, sick as she was. But being convinced by her reply and her looks that she was perfectly free of fever, and entirely cured, he was persuaded that the will of God was too clearly expressed for him to deprive that innocent and fervent soul any longer of that divine food, which is the bread and support of the strong.

Finally, the presence alone of the Eucharistic Sacrament was for Mary Ann the sweetest comfort which she could have on earth. She spent five or six hours of the day in the church of the Jesuits, and always motionless, with her eyes either fixed on the tabernacle or on the altars, in the act of profound adoration of the most Blessed Sacrament. Every year during both the three last days of Carnival and those of Holy Week she never left the church, even at night, but remained all the time without repose and without food, to keep company with her Beloved. She was sometimes seen with her face quite inflamed, and panting as it were with the

vehemence of her affection, unable to control the flame of divine love which consumed her inmost soul. At other times she remained as one in an ecstacy, transported out of herself, bereft entirely of her senses, and bathed in a flood of tender tears, which quietly flowed from her eyes. At this time she was perfectly insensible to all that passed around her, and it was useless to call her even with a loud voice by her name, or shake her by her dress or person, in order to make her come to herself. Ocular witnesses affirmed that there was frequently about her, before and after communion, an air of angelic beauty; that her face was surrounded with rays, or resplendent with the brightest light; that it dazzled the eyes of all who beheld it. At which time it was useless to approach her to speak to her, although it were only for a moment and of necessary things. One morning one of the Society went to her to tell her something of importance, some considerable time after she had approached the holy table, whilst she was still kneeling in a corner of the church, with her veil drawn down over her breast, and her mind wholly recollected in God. He called her many times, but always without effect; be-

cause she neither heard nor saw any thing. At last coming to herself, she raised her head a little, and with her face inflamed in an extraordinary manner, "My Father," said she, "I have just finished my communion," and without another word she covered herself again, and continued her profound contemplation. Were we to judge from what appeared exteriourly in her person, what must we imagine must have been the interiour delights which replenished her soul. But we shall have an opportunity of speaking of these more in detail in another place. What has been said will suffice to show us her extraordinary and wonderful love towards the divine Sacrament of the altar.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SOLITARY LIFE OF THE BLESSED MARY ANN IN HER DOMESTIC RETREAT. HER INTERIOUR MORTIFICATION AND PERPECT MASTERY OVER HER PASSIONS. HOW PERFECTLY SHE OBSERVED HER VOWS OF POVERTY AND OBEDIENCE EVEN IN THINGS DIFFICULT AND REPUGNANT TO NATURE.

In taking up the history of the life of the Blessed Mary Ann, it is but proper we should

speak of her domestic solitude, of her entire detachment from every thing created, of the denial of her own will, which are also parts of the interiour as well as exteriour mortification, of which we have been heretofore speaking.

From the moment the blessed child, at the age of twelve, voluntarily shut herself up in her retirement, she lived in the midst of the world, within the walls of her paternal home, and in a thickly crowded city, no otherwise than if she had been in the most remote and forsaken solitude of the desert. She no longer allowed any one from without to enter her rooms; nay, not even her nearest relatives of the house, except very rarely, or on business; desiring to live solely to herself, and completely aloof from the world, which she had renounced forever. The day dedicated to the festival of the most Blessed Trinity was the only exception, when her apartment was opened to those of the family, and this only for the purpose of conducting them to her little altar, there to pay their tribute of adoration to that august mystery, to which she was extremely devout. Before introducing them, however, she set her poor furniture in good order, washed the walls and pavements of the

spots of blood scattered over them, and hid all her instruments of penance, with which she was well supplied. There were a great many persons who, hearing by report of the rigid austerities of Mary Ann, became very urgent in their entreaties to be admitted for a moment into her quarters, to behold with their own eyes what they had heard, to their great surprise, about her: but it was not possible, when she discovered their object, to induce her to satisfy their curiosity. Once, however, she could not escape, without disobeying the many pressing solicitations made her by D. Giuseppa Tineo, a lady belonging to one of the first families and of great piety. This lady, after having begged of the servant of God with a great deal of earnestness but always in vain, to be allowed to see her rooms, had at last recourse to her confessor, and obtained from him a positive order. Then Mary Ann finding it imposible to offer further resistance, fled to prayer to consult her Divine Spouse; and she arose from it so consoled, that D. Scolastica Sarmiento, who had brought her the command of her confessor, she said—"You will see that Signora Tineo, although she has got the permission of my con-

fessor, will not gain her object;" and she added, "I have asked of my Spouse not to cause me the pain I would experience were that lady permitted to enter my poor chamber, because she would see things there which I would not wish any one to see." And so in fact it happened; for the lady, after being kindly led into the first room of the apartment, no sooner cast her eye upon the coffin that was in the middle of the floor, with the skeleton in it, than she was seized with such horror that she fainted on the spot, and not wishing to advance any farther, it was necessary to raise her up and carry her insensible out of the apartment.

Even Catharine, the Indian servant, and D. Sebastiana her niece, who dwelt in the same apartment, could very seldom gain admittance into the more private rooms of Mary Ann, where she kept her instruments of penance. The blessed girl was there all alone, either absorbed in deep contemplation, or mortifying her innocent body in the most unheard-of ways: and she never left them, except it was at noon to serve at the table of her relatives, or towards evening to recite with them the holy rosary, or to read some pious book. The rest of the day

she was never seen wandering through the other parts of the house, or stopping to entertain herself with any one, although it were only for a moment.

She never left the house when she was in good health, except to go every morning to the church of the Society of Jesus, where she spent her time praying and solacing herself with the holy Sacraments till it was eleven o'clock. She always went and returned by the shortest and most expeditious way; and such was her modesty and composure that the very sight of her was calculated to excite one to devotion. She wore a long veil which reached to her breast, and with it she completely covered her face and hands; and she walked with such recollection, that she noticed none who passed her, and it frequently became necessary for her nieces and the other ladies who accompanied her to warn her to return the salutations of many persons who came purposely at that hour to meet and recommend themselves to her. From the testimony in the different processes, we learn that she only went once to the church of St. Francis to assist, as we said before, at the obsequies of her niece D. Sebastiana; and on another occa

sion she once changed her ordinary way to the church of the Jesuits. The cause of it was this: When she was either going or returning from the church, some persons seeing her at a distance, made use of these words: "Look, here comes the Saint;" and this was the common name by which she was called by every body in Quito. Mary Ann heard the words, and it cannot be imagined how painful they were to her humility. She shed copious tears before her God, and for many days increased her ordinary mortifications. She deprived herself of that trifling refreshment which she took to quench her burning thirst, by keeping in her mouth small pieces of apple and extracting the juice; and she tortured herself with other penances, as if she would punish in herself the esteem and good opinion which others had of her. And finally, she proposed, in her own mind, to alter her rout, and in fact she did so the next morning to escape hearing similar expressions of esteem. But having confided the whole affair, as was her custom, to her confessor, he thought otherwise. and she immediately submitted her will to his. When she was invited by her nieces and her other female relatives to go with them

to some extraordinary and solemn sacred function, that was celebrated in the city, she always excused herself by saying, that she could not do so without special leave of her confessor. Suppressing in this manner every emotion of curiosity, although perfectly innocent, she persevered to her death, spending her days entirely hidden in her own rooms, or in the church of the Jesuits.

All this arose from the little value Mary Ann set on the things of this world. Accustomed from her tender years to know and contemplate with the eyes of the mind the incomparable greatness of heaven, every time she cast her eye upon the goods here below, she could never discover in them any thing to be derived as precious, but rather why they should be abhorred as vile and sordid. From this same source also sprung the small account she made of beauty of person, nobility of blood, abundance of riches, and whatever the world loves and embraces, and holds as the chief happiness of man. From the time she consecrated herself to God by a perpetual vow of poverty, she retained nothing as her own, but as lent her by her sister D. Girolama. She lived in the house just as if she

had been taken in through charity, and maintained out of pure charity; the furniture of her rooms could not have been worse, or of a poorer description. The whole of it consisted of a painting of the most Blessed Trinity, two little statues of the Infant Jesus and his most Blessed Mother, and a few other simple pictures of her patron Saints. In addition to these she had a small bed and a few chairs, which were merely for show, a guitar on which she sometimes sang some pious hymns, some lives of the Saints and other spiritual books, a large collection of penetential instruments, and nothing more. It was her invariable custom to have no other dress than that she had on, which was, as we said, of plain serge, and which she mended with her own hand. She never made a present of the most trifling little thing without first getting the express consent of her confessor, neither did she ever take any thing of the house, even for her own use, without asking permission of her relatives. Whenever presents were offered or sent her by her friends, she either would not receive them, or if she were obliged for fear of giving offence to take them, she immediately distributed them to the poor. And with the

consent of her confessor she gave in the same manner what she gained by the labour of her hands during the hours which were not devoted to the concerns of her soul.

But the perfect detachment from the goods of the earth, and the voluntary renunciation made of them by means of evangelical poverty, however hard it may be to the flesh, which is constrained to subject itself to continual inconvenience and trouble, bears no comparison with the excellence of that virtue which is necessary for the bridling and correcting the interiour passions of the soul, and to renounce one's own will and judgment, following reason alone as a guide, and the direction of those whom God has given us to be our directors and masters. To show how much the Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus signalized herself in this regard, I could here relate, if it would not take too long, the depositions of those who, of their own knowledge declared that she had arrived to a perfect mastery over the emotions of the soul in every kind of affection. At the beginning of her devout life, when that storm of contradictions, of which we have already spoken, was raised against her, even by persons of known probity and learning,

she was never observed to show any resentment, or be in the least ruffled; but always the same, she bore with a calm mind and serene look, and with unalterable peace, the taunts and cutting observations of her enemies. And as she had been in the habit of conquering herself, she succeeded in acquiring those two difficult things, which constitute the perfection of virtue, viz: to rejoice in scorn and contempt, as if they were so many praises and honours, and to have such an absolute mastery over herself as to render her exempt from the violence of those first and sudden emotions which frequently surprise and overpower reason. Thus did this blessed soul enjoy, as in a secure port, perpetual calm and tranquillity; and whatever turn things took, far from giving her any disturbance, they afforded her, on the contrary, incomparable content and delight, because in them she beheld the eternal ordinations of divine providence. As far as she was personally concerned, being fully persuaded that the way of sufferings is the shortest and the most profitable, she besought her beloved Spouse continually, that should it please his divine majesty that he would deign conduct her to sanctity not by the extraordinary graces of

predilection, of which she thought herself unworthy, but by trials of humiliations, contempt, and a life entirely hidden from the eyes of men

It is not wonderful if to the interiour mortification of the affections of the soul, she added a perfect renunciation of her own will and judgment. From the time she bound herself by the vow of obedience to her confessor, we can say with truth, she had no longer any will or judgment of her own, giving herself up entirely to the guidance and direction of him who had charge of her soul. Her first confessor was, as we very frequently said, Father John Camaccio, who undertook the direction of her from her tender years, and under whose paternal care she reached the highest point of perfection. After him she had Fathers Antonio Monosalvas, Luigi Vasquez, Luca della Queva, Gion Pietro Severino, Alfonso Roxas, and towards the last years of her life, God himself, by a special disposition of divine providence, gave her for her spiritual director Brother Ferdinando della Croce, all of them religious of the Society of Jesus. To them she gave an exact account of her conscience every day, and with much humility and wonderful sincerity manifested the interiour emotions

of her soul, the mortifications and penances which she practised, and the favours which she received from God: nor did she ever depart an iota from their prescriptions, although they were contrary and repugnant to her own views. Even those very things which, of their nature, are extremely dear to a soul enamoured with God, such as to go to church, to pray and receive the Sacraments were only pleasing to her inasmuch as they were done through obedience; and she would have had a great scruple if she had suffered herself to be influenced by her fervour to undertake any thing, however holy and good it might be, from any other motive than to please God and do his divine will, of which her confessors were the secure and legitimate interpreters. At first, to put her virtue to the test sometimes one and sometimes another ordered her not to approach the holy table; nay, more, not to go to church: and she in the true spirit of obedience resigned herself entirely to their good pleasure. The family were astonished to see her stay at home on certain days and not even hear mass; but no one, from respect to her, dared to ask her the reason. Only Catharine the Indian, whom we have so frequently men-

tioned in this history, with impertinent simplicity asked her mistress, one morning, why she was not getting ready that day to go to the church, according to custom. And Mary Ann told her, without being in the least disturbed, "I am not going because I am a daughter of obedience."

No matter how hard or difficult the things were that were enjoined her, she never suffered herself to be actuated by any judgment or sentiment contrary to the perfection of obedience. To make a practical trial to what degree of subjection she had brought her will, Father Camaccio ordered her to lay open her whole interiour to her niece D. Giovanna di Casso, and not conceal one thing either of her penances or the divine favours which, up to that hour, she had received in such abundance from the liberal hand of the Lord; and at the same time he acquainted D. Giovanna with the order he had given Mary Ann. Every one can imagine how much it must have cost the servant of God blindly to submit to such a command, overcoming with heroic fortitude every feeling of natural repugnance, which was doubly increased from the low opinion she had of herself. The fact

was, she was no sooner returned home than she called aside her niece, and after telling her the command she had received from her confessor, with no less humility than sincerity, began to manifest all the severe treatment which she had ever inflicted on herself by the practice of so many mortifications and penances; after this she disclosed to her, one by one, the favours and singular gifts which Almighty God had poured into her bosom with such abundance and predilection; and she narrated every thing with as much minuteness and sincerity as if she were rendering an account to her confessor under seal of confession. D. Giovanna was almost beside herself through wonder; and this not so much on account of that heroic act of obedience, on the part of her aunt, as on account of the great and extraordinary things which she heard. She tried to impress them deeply upon her mind, and scarcely was the other finished before she arose to retire to her own room and put on paper what she had heard. After going a few steps she wished to call to mind what she had heard, but she had only a general and confused recollection. She remembered in general to have heard things truly wonderful and extra-

ordinary; but in particular she remembered nothing, her mind being filled with a thousand strange and vague ideas. Wherefore being more than ever astonished and perplexed at the strangeness of the thing, she returned back into the Saint's room and said—"Pray, tell me again, I entreat you, what you just now told me; for I don't know how, but I can't remember a single word of all that you told me: you will not refuse me this favour which I ask of you, since you were already pleased to unbosom your whole soul to me." But the servant of God, who was perfectly aware of what had happened by a light from above, smiled a little hearing her talk in this manner; and notwithstanding the earnest and humble entreaties which were made her, she could never be induced to repeat a single word, thinking it sufficient that she had punctually executed the obedience imposed upon her. Her niece, however, was not disheartened, but renewing her entreaties she asked her "how will I ever be able to reply to Father Camaccio, should he wish to know of me if you have obeyed?" Mary Ann, with the greatest mildness, replied—"You will tell my father confessor that I have obeyed his command, but that

my heavenly Spouse does not wish my affairs to be known whilst I am still alive: and this is sufficient. For yourself, complain of your deficiency of memory, and hence learn that it is the will of God that his secrets should not be investigated." Nor did the wonder cease here; for, after the death of Mary Ann, all the impressions so long lost suddenly revived in the mind of her niece clear and distinct; and so she was able to recount a great portion of what, on that occasion, she had heard from her holy aunt.

Father Antonio Monosalvas confessed, in his juridical deposition, that being still quite young and not much skilled in the direction of souls of consummate perfection and sanctity, it not unfrequently happened that he commanded the servant of God several things which were not at all suited to that way of virtue, by which God wished to direct her. Notwithstanding this Mary Ann, although she plainly saw by a light from above that her confessor was mistaken, obeyed to the very letter without reply. Only the next day, when presenting herself before him, she humbly prayed him that "he would be pleased to read, at his convenience, a particular chapter or paragraph which she had marked in the book she gave him." And the Father

added. that "precisely in that very place he found the solution of his doubts, and discovering the mistake he had made, applied himself more and more earnestly to prayer, and implored light from Heaven to enable him to conduct souls by that way, by which God called them to himself.

But where the humility and obedience of Mary Ann were displayed in their highest perfection was in the following fact. Since Brother Ferdinando della Croce, from that sympathetic feeling of the soul which existed between them, had a perfect knowledge of the marvellous life of that blessed soul, he thought with himself that it would greatly tend to God's glory, if she should undertake, through obedience, to write an exact account of her whole life, and by this means the world would have from herself an exact detail of her virtues, and those most singular favours which God had bestowed upon her. He commanded her, therefore, under pain of disobedience, to write down a faithful narrative of every thing that had passed up to that moment in her innocent soul. Any one who knows any thing of perfection may easily judge what an heroic act is required to obey such a command, especially in the case of an humble

and holy person. Mary Ann was touched to the very quick; and as she knew that it was not contrary to the perfection of the will prompt to obey, to propose with due deference to her superiour her reasons to the contrary, she signified to her director what her humility and contempt of herself suggested, in order to rid herself of the task imposed upon her, if they should seem good to him. But the good religious, after having listened with attention to all her reasons, concluded by telling her bluntly and in few words, that she must obey. She submissively bowed her head, and suppressing every natural repugnance, immediately began to execute the order that had been given her. And she had already accomplished a good portion of her task, when learning by a light from above that such was not the will of her Divine Spouse, she returned to Brother Ferdinando and briefly informed him of the interiour voice she had heard, but with entire resignation to his judgment. He seeing that it was the will of God, yielded and revoked his order; and she immediately tearing in pieces what she had written joyfully gave up the undertaking, and thus we were deprived of that most interesting account of her interiour life.

CHAPTER X.

THE GREAT LOVE OF THE BLESSED MARY ANN TOWARDS GOD. HER ARDENT DESIRE TO SUFFER, AND THE INCREDIBLE DELIGHT SHE EXPERIENCED IN SUFFERINGS. HER INNOCENCE OF LIFE AND THE ANGELIC PURITY OF HER MANNERS, WHICH SHE PRESERVED UNSPOTTED TO HER DEATH.—WONDERFUL EFFECTS OF THE SAME.

THE more the Blessed Mary Ann was free from the empire of the passions and detatched from the love of creatures, the more she was intimately connected with and united to God. All her thoughts and affections were turned to her chief good; and from the divine love they derived their origin, regulation and direction, and in the divine love terminated her every action It is only from the effects which it produced that we can form any idea of the ardent love which burnt continually in her heart: and these effects could not have been clearer or of a more wonderful character. Among these were the gift of tears, the visible fire that appeared

in her countenance, the power of remaining hours and whole nights motionless and in a state of ecstacy, encircled by rays, and transported out of her senses, and sometimes also raised with her whole body above the ground. In the church of the Jesuits her ordinary place was under the steps which led to the pulpit; and she chose this in preference, both from humility and in order to be less observed. But she did not gain her end; for those present perceiving the frequent and wonderful raptures of her soul in God—even ladies of the highest nobility strove with each other to place themselves at her side, and to feel devotion at the very sight of her. Having gone early one morning to church with the other ladies, her relatives, she remained the whole morning upon her knees, as motionless as if she had been a statue, and buried in profound contemplation. The hour was already late and near noon, and consequently the ladies, wishing to return home, went up to Mary Ann and saluted her. She did not perceive them although they called her several times, and shook her by her clothes and by her arm. Then D. Maria de Paredes raised her veil, which reached almost to her very feet, and with her companions saw

her in ecstacy, transported out of herself, with her hands crossed upon her breast, her mouth wide open, and a smile playing upon her lips, and her eyes filled with tears and fixed on heaven. They would not disturb her, but went home, leaving her to enjoy the delights of paradise.

She felt such a spiritual relish in conversing of God, that she seemed to have had him always present, as she was always united to him in mind and heart. She was asked one day by D. Petronilla of St. Bruno, her great friend, to play her a tune on a kind of lute, and she consented. But after a few moments she suddenly stopped still, with her hands resting on the strings, and became, as it were, ecstatic for the space of an entire hour; at length, coming to herself and with her face all inflamed, "Oh, Petronilla," she exclaimed, "what great things there are in paradise!" She could say this much and no more, when she was interrupted by the vehemence of her affection and a copious shower of tears. In her solitude also she kept, as we said before, a musical instrument, and with it she was wont to raise her heart to God, accompanying the music with her voice. But it happened very often

that after a few moments she was obliged to cease altogether, being overcome by the interiour emotions of her affections. She had composed for her own use some stanzas in rhyme, and they were burning aspirations of her love towards God. Hence we are not to be surprised that some of the witnesses testified that they frequently heard in her rooms a chorus of the sweetest voices; and since there is no doubt that she was alone, their suspicion was not improbable that the angels united their voices with hers to praise together their common Creator.

Every thing which came under her eyes served as an occasion to her to raise her heart to God, therefore she was often seen all inflamed with the divine love, fainting and languishing like a pure lily before the scorching beams of the sun. The plants, the flowers, the herbs, the waters, all creatures were so many voices to her, which made her heart throb with joy. I will say, moreover, that in the evils and miseries of this world she found a motive to love God more and more. Conversing one day with D. Eleonora Rodriguez, they began to speak together of the calamities and dangers which are encountered in this mortal life: in which conversation the

servant of God became very much excited, and turning to that pious lady, she told her that when she considered the miseries of this life and the dangers which are found in it, she became inflamed as a burning coal, and fled for refuge to the side of Jesus Christ, and there took up her repose.

But the most convincing proof which we have of her great love of God was undoubtedly the great desire she had of suffering, and of suffering much, and of suffering more and more every day. There were two causes which aroused within her heart these generous desires, viz: to become conformable to the image of Jesus Christ, and the hope that her sufferings would shorten her days, and unite her eternally to her God. In her prayers, and especially on Fridays, she was accustomed to ask of our Lord that he would give her much to suffer, and the power of exhibiting to Him some correspondence of love. When she was afterwards attacked by those long and painful infirmities, her ordinary relief was to repeat with unalterable peace, "May it be all for the love of God." At other times she was in the habit of saying, with great affection "Oh, if one could enjoy God! oh, if

one could die for love of Him! oh, if one could die to enjoy Him!" Speaking one day with Petronilla of St. Bruno, she candidly confessed that she felt herself burning and consuming interiourly with the fire of the divine love. Then like one in an ecstacy she went on repeating: "Do you know, O, sister, that one of my feet is already swelling, but it gives me no pain; for the desire which I have of enjoying my God is so great that death alone will satisfy me; I desire nothing but to die soon. St. Gertrude, my patroness and mother, was pleased to visit me, and after consoling me with her words has told me that my Spouse has prepared for me seven precious rings. Oh, that one could die for love of Him! oh, that one could be entirely consumed with his love! oh, could one die in order to enjoy Him forever!" Having said this, without another word, she suddenly left the company and withdrew to her rooms.

Not content with the horrible tortures which she voluntarily inflicted on her body, she had a holy envy for those martyrs who had suffered more in hatred of the faith for the love of Jesus Christ. Having heard, one evening, the passion of a holy martyr read, she became so inflamed

that she prayed our Lord to make her suffer some extraordinary torment. Having therefore gone to bed, after a short sleep she awoke with her whole body racked with terrible pains, one foot being contracted, an arm palsied, her tongue parched and wounded, and her whole person so bruised and sore as to be unable to move without the assistance of others. Her relatives hastened to her and anxiously inquired the cause of so great an affliction. She dissembled a little, but when she saw that they were going to send immediately for the physicians, she told them, with a great deal of simplicity, that they should not trouble themselves about her sufferings; that they were the delights of her heavenly Spouse, sent her to satisfy, in some manner, the ardent love she had of suffering for the faith. And she related that it seemed to her in her sleep that she had been actually in the islands of Japan, where those barbarians had tormented her with no ordinary cruelty. It was precisely at this time that the persecutions against the Japanese Christians were raging with the greatest violence: and Mary Ann, reading the accounts which came thence, was inflamed every day more and more with the desire of partaking

also in the like torments, and it was sometimes miraculously granted her by Almighty God. She even once hinted to one of her more confidential friends, that the acute pains which she was then suffering corresponded exactly to the torments inflicted on the martyrs in Japan. And she continued no less than three months in this state of painful martyrdom.

Father Luca della Cueva related in his deposition that, having gone to visit Mary Ann, who was lying sick in bed, and having been greatly edified to see that in place of complaining of her painful malady, she burnt with a desire of suffering still more, he recited to her that passage of Job, (ch. vi. 8.) *Who will grant that my request may come, and that he that hath begun may destroy me; and that this may be my comfort, that afflicting me with sorrow he spare not?* which was precisely in accordance with the spirit of the servant of God. That after having briefly expounded and commented upon it, he told her of what had happened in Toledo, in Spain, to a very virtuous young lady, and penitent of Father Baldassarre Alvarez, the great spiritual master. This lady had been sent, without any fault of hers, into the prisons

of the holy Inquisition, and remained there without justifying herself, as she could easily have done. But Father Alvarez taking up her defence, she obtained her liberty. At which the fervorous young lady was not only not pleased, but going to Father Alvarez expostulated with him saying: "Ah, Father, my Father! how I regret that I lost the chance of receiving two hundred lashes in the public streets of Toledo?" Wishing to signify by this that she, without any fault on her side, would gladly have submitted to any ill treatment for the love of God. When he had finished his narration, Father della Cueva asked Mary Ann "If she were also ready to be beaten through the streets of Quito?" And she immediately replied, "I am ready, perfectly ready;" and she added, moreover, that "she said it with all her heart." The words of the Father remained afterwards so deeply engraven upon her mind, that being obliged a few days later to start for his missions among the heathens, after several months he received a letter from Mary Ann, in which she entreated him to send her in writing that sentence of Job, in order that she might have it continually before her eyes and meditate upon

it. In fine, to be brief, the love she had for suffering was insatiable, and she seemed to know of no other happiness than humiliations, infirmities, pains, which were dearer and more precious, just as they were more sensible and painful, glorifying God in them, for whose love she rejoiced in sufferings.

We must now speak of the two principal effects of her love towards God, which are the care she had of never offending him in the least, and of always keeping her soul united to him by means of prayer. As to Mary Ann's great purity of conscience I shall be very brief, giving only the testimony of her confessors, all of whom affirmed with one voice that for the space of twenty-six years that she lived, she never stained her baptismal innocence, not only by no serious sin, but not even by the smallest deliberate venial transgression. Every morning, before going to communion, she presented herself at the tribunal of penance, and there shed an abundance of bitter tears of repentance, as if she had been the greatest sinner in the world. And yet she never had any thing of which to accuse herself, except some trifling levities and inadvertencies committed in the first years of her life, before

she had attained the full use of reason. Besides the two general and particular examens which she made every morning and evening, at every hour of the day she recollected herself, and carefully scrutinized her every action to see, I will not say if she had committed any defect, but whether she had performed them in the best, most perfect and pleasing manner to God.

Hence we must not be surprised if she observed, with the greatest exactness and perfection to her death, the vow of virginal chastity, by which she bound herself to God forever, before she had attained her eighth year. The purity of her soul and body was always extreme; and her confessors themselves knew not what other name to give it than by saying that it was altogether *wonderful, rare, singular, extraordinary, angelical.* Father Camaccio attested that Mary Ann *had made a vow of purity and virginity, which she preserved unstained by the least thought or imagination which could cast a shadow or blemish upon it.* And Father Monosalvas affirmed, under oath, that *her chastity was angelical, and that she never accused herself of any thing that was at all contrary to holy purity; and she was accustomed to give God*

thanks that she did not even know what it was. And Father Roxas added, *that according to her belief, things contrary to purity never entered the minds of virgins.* By a singular favour of heaven, therefore, Mary Ann had the extremely rare privilege of being entirely free and exempt from every interiour combat, and from the least rebellion of the flesh.

The fact is, it was sufficient for any one to become enamoured with purity merely to look at her; her face reflected the interiour beauty and innocence of her soul: and she was so extremely jealous of it that she observed the strictest watch to preserve it from every breath that could tarnish it. Both in going to the church as well as in returning, her carriage was slow, extremely modest, with her face covered and her eyes fixed upon the ground: and when she was stopped by any one desirous of speaking to her, she disengaged herself in few and well-measured words as soon as she could. She never admitted a male person into her rooms; and once, when Maria de Paredes, her relative, informed her that a man was at the door who desired to consult her about some doubts of his soul, between wonder and horror she exclaimed,

"And what is this? A man wants to speak with me? I pray you that you bring no man to speak with me, and if he will return again you will say to him that I have no permission of my confessor to speak with him, and if he come to confer with me on any business of importance, let him go and consult the Fathers of the Society."

It will be seen still better by the following incident, how extremely delicate she was in this regard. A member of the Royal Audience of Quito, a man well advanced in years, distinguished for his good sense, and a man of eminent piety, on account of the great and wonderful things he had heard of her, had conceived the highest opinion of Mary Ann's sanctity, and desired, the first opportunity he should have, to see her and become personally acquainted with her. He happened to meet her one day in the public street, when she was on her way home from the church of the Jesuits, and being struck with her angelic modesty and the profound recollection of her carriage, he stopped to behold her, and when she was sufficiently near, he presented himself before her, humbly asking her that she would recommend him to God; after this he extended his hands, and in token of

reverence and respect embraced her. At this unexpected occurrence the chaste virgin blushed deeply, and without saying a word, as if beside herself for shame, fled quickly home, where she had hardly arrived before she burst into a flood of tears, as if she had committed some great fault or crime. After having given vent to her grief for some time, she related, still weeping to D. Sebastiana her niece, what had happened to her; and when the other, after hearing the cause, began to console him, saying, that "she had no reason to afflict herself, since there was no malice in the act, and she was not at all accessory to it;" "yes," replied the servant of God, "all this I know and believe, and in truth it is as you say: nevertheless, what will my Divine Spouse say, who is jealous of my honour?" She allowed herself no peace, till it seemed to her that she had cancelled by her many and severe penances every shade of sin that might have been contracted by her.

Up to the last moments of her life there was nothing which she recommended with greater earnestness, and left it besides in writing, than that as soon as she was dead, her sister D. Girolama, and her niece D. Giovanna, with another

lady, her confidant, should dress her body with the greatest decency, and should not allow any other ladies to approach to touch it. For the same reason she begged of Almighty God, with many prayers, that her body should not be preserved uncorrupt after her death; because she did not like, as she told her confessor, to be seen and handled by any one although a corpse. And in fact we shall see, in its proper place, that she miraculously gave signs of the repugnance she felt in this regard even upon her bier, when some person approached to kiss her in token of respect.

The virginal modesty and purity of Mary Ann were so well known and public all over the city of Quito, that no one ever dared to use language towards her that could be in the least offensive, except a certain individual who was perfect stranger to her. Whilst she was one day in the church, perfectly recollected, and with her heart and mind fixed on God, an impertinent young man coming in by accident, approached her and with bold effrontery requested her to uncover her face. For some time Mary Ann paid no attention to the fellow's insolent demand; but when he became bolder, and insisted

on it for the third time, the modest young lady, as if inspired by Almighty God, raised her veil a little which concealed her head and face, and in a firm and resolute voice said to him—"What do you wish, sir? I am here learning how to die, you sir, do the same, if you wish to save your soul." And having said this she turned to wrap herself up as before in her cloak. Whether it were the tone of voice, or really, as some of the witnesses deposed, he saw in place of Mary Ann's face, by a miracle, nothing less than a horrible skull, the impudent fellow seeing her turn and speak to him in that manner, was completely abashed, and trembling from head to foot, ran and fled into the sacristy of the same church, where, trembling from head to foot, he related to those he found there what had occurred, who, instead of compassionating him, rebuked him severely, calling him a devil for daring to tempt that angel of modesty and innocence.

It is true, that after this the spirit of darkness was the only external enemy who endeavoured to disturb the peace of Mary Ann, and Almighty God permitted it as a greater trial of her virtue. A great number therefore of devils,

taking visible forms, presented themselves frequently before this innocent virgin in horrid and lewd shapes. When she saw these disgusting images before her she was filled with a holy horror, and shutting her eyes raised her mind and heart to God, entreating him to come to her aid and rescue: and this alone was sufficient to put the whole host of these malicious spirits immediately to flight. Failing in this attempt, the infernal enemy tried a more cunning artifice. One day, when Mary Ann was in church, a very handsome and polite young man accosted her, who, presenting himself to her in a very fascinating manner, offered his services, giving every evidence of his admiration of her. By a supernatural light the chaste virgin saw at first sight through the treacherous mask which the devil had assumed to deceive her; therefore, without more, with an air of scorn and cutting sarcasm, she told him. that he should make these offers of service and regard to God his Creator, and ask pardon of him for his intolerable pride. As for herself, being a poor miserable sinner, she was in no way worthy of being esteemed or honoured by any one. The proud spirit could not stand these words, and disappeared in an in-

stant, nor did he ever afterwards molest the servant of God on this point.

Finally, I am persuaded that that most delicious odour which the body of Mary Ann exhaled, and which communicated itself to every thing which she used, was the effect or demonstration of her immaculate purity. Such at least was the unanimous opinion of all the witnesses who gave evidence in the different processes. They said that both her person as well as her clothes, sent forth almost always such a fragrant odour, that had they not known her abhorrence for every kind of delicacy, they would have been convinced that she made use of the most precious perfumes. And Catharine the Indian affirmed, that when she entered her rooms, she perceived an odour which might be called heavenly. The blood taken from her veins, besides preserving its purity, emitted an agreeable odour: a most beautiful lily sprung from it, as we shall relate more at large in its proper place. The same odour of lilies was perceived many years after her death, not once, but many times, in the apartment formerly inhabited by her And finally, it can be said, that the miracle still continues down to our own day, since her bones.

although left for a long time in unslacked lime preserve still at the present moment—even the smallest fragments, an aromatic and most agreeable odour, as every one may judge for himself. But what we have briefly said, will suffice for the present, as we intend to speak of it more in detail in another place.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HIGH DEGREE OF PRAYER TO WHICH THE BLESSED MARY ANN WAS RAISED BY ALMIGHTY GOD. THE CONTINUAL BUT VAIN ASSAULTS OF THE DEVIL TO DIVERT HER FROM IT. THE HEROIC RESIGNATION AND PATIENCE SHE DISPLAYED IN TIME OF ARIDITY AND DESOLATION OF SPIRIT. GOD PROVIDES HER WITH AN EXPERIENCED DIRECTOR WHO CONSOLES HER.

Let us now come to prayer, which is, as we said above, another effect of consummate charity. How the Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus advanced in this holy exercise, from grade to grade, her very infancy gives evidence, as the Holy Ghost himself, without the aid of human instruction,

taught her to withdraw herself from the most familiar friends and hide herself in the woods, or in some secluded part of the house, and there remain in prayer with such interiour satisfaction that hours passed away as if they were moments, and she became insensible to every thing exteriour. As she advanced in years, and by the continual practice of meditating, she reached that best and most perfect degree, which is to keep the mind always fixed on God, and absorbed in the highest contemplation. Father Camaccio affirmed this of her in these express words—"Our Lord raised her to the highest degree of contemplation, which consists in knowing God and his perfections without reasoning, and of loving him without interruption." And the same thing all her other confessors confirmed, adding that "she never lost sight of her God, having him always present by the most intimate communication of spirit, and that to have material for contemplation, she had no farther need of books or any other thing, since all that she saw or heard served as a ladder to mount to God and repose in him, loving him with her whole heart."

The time which she expressly allotted to it

always consisted of many hours of the day and of the night; for it can be truly said that her whole life was one prolonged meditation and prayer. And this was observed by those of her own household, who almost always found her on her knees immovable, and praying with such intensity that it was not sufficient to call her several times, or shake her very forcibly in order to make her recover her senses. Neither was she herself, although anxious to avoid any exteriour demonstration, such a mistress of her own actions, inasmuch as she could not, when she wished, recall her mind from this continual abstraction. What were the special illuminations, the extraordinary lights, the favours, the delights and the heavenly sweetnesses which she imbibed from prayer with those other enjoyments which Almighty God communicated to her soul in his conversation with her, are only really known and appreciated by those who have experinced them. We can only say that great indeed must have been the advantages and fruit which she derived from that familiar communication with her Beloved, since the devil employed every means to disturb her in this holy exercise.

Sometimes there issued from under the little altar, before which Mary Ann prayed in her room, a great quantity of egg-shells which, being put in motion without any visible cause, struck against each other and made a considerable noise; at other times a small knife was seen to move, as if in the hand of some unseen person, which would approach her neck and seem about to strike it. But the servant of God very soon discovering the pitiful artifice of the tempter, would not even deign to turn her head, or give herself the least uneasiness. The enemy being provoked at this, appeared to her in a visible and more horrible form, threatening her with a sword in his hand. But she told him, with great peace and tranquillity, that "he was losing his time, hoping in that manner to divert her from her meditation; that she was a weak and sinful creature, but had placed all her confidence in her heavenly Spouse, who would protect her." The devil being again overcome, changed his manner, and began, under the appearance of a horrible mastiff, to bark and run up and down the rooms. Mary Ann, for some time, bore with this annoyance, but at last she took the resolution to go up to him boldly and

catch him, and having secured him tied him to the foot of the bed. This having, by some means or other, come to the knowledge of one of her nieces, she asked her "If she were not afraid to catch the devil with her hands and tie him in that manner?" And she replied, "Why should I be afraid of that dog, which can do nothing but bark?" She said no more, and immediately changed the conversation.

The evil one did not however merely confine himself to threats and barking only, but several times vented his rage against her by striking her and maltreating her in every part of her body, and especially her tongue, which, as some of the family deposed, was seen one morning hanging from her lips, suspended only by a thin thread of skin. Mary Ann was not frightened at this; but having replaced her lacerated tongue in her mouth with her own hands, and collected her strength the best way she could, she went to the church, communicated, and returned home perfectly cured. I will add, in conclusion to this subject, the relation of a singular adventure, in which it would be difficult to say, whether the constancy or generosity of mind of our saint were more conspicuously dis-

played. One night, whilst she was buried in a profound meditation, she perceived that the light, which she always kept burning in her apartment, was suddenly extinguished: and knowing well that this was one of the usual insults offered her by the devil, without caring about relighting the lamp, she approached the coffin in the dark, and, taking out the skeleton, stretched herself in its place in order to continue her prayer in peace. The next morning, at day-break, she rose from the coffin and deliberately opened the window-shutter in order to give light to the room. Here a spectacle met her eyes which she had not expected. The skeleton was no longer lying upon the floor, where she had placed it, but was standing erect upon its feet, and leaning against the wall, with its dry hands crossed upon its breast, and wearing a most dreadful and terrible look. Mary Ann did not faint away at the sight, because she was supported in a special manner by Almighty God, but she could not but feel a lively and natural horror. For a moment she stood motionless and irresolute: then a ray of light penetrating her mind, she knew that this must be a new trick of the enemy to frighten her, sprin-

kled the skeleton with holy water, and courageously taking it up in her arms immediately turned to place it, as it was before, in the coffin.

But the longest and most painful battles which Mary Ann had to encounter for her greater merit did not come from hell but from heaven. Some years had passed in an undisturbed peace and security, when all at once she found herself involved in the midst of the darkness of obscurity and perplexity, with her heart oppressed by aridity and desolation of spirit. Losing all taste and relish for the things of God, the very attempt of applying herself to prayer or of reading any spiritual book was one and the same thing as to feel herself oppressed with a deep sadness and annoyance. The trial was indeed hard and difficult for a soul so enamoured with God, and accustomed, from her tender years, to be always united to him, and to revel in the delights of paradise. Father Camaccio, her confessor, went so far as to say that "the tediousness, the desolation and the interiour anguish which she suffered were such that they would long before have deprived her of life had not God, in his wisdom, miraculously preserved it in order to increase her merit. In this multiplicity

of afflictions, far from despondency, she persevered with heroic constancy firm in the divine love, observing exactly the distribution of time prescribed for prayer, and seeking continually in the midst of darkness her Beloved, who seemed purposely to hide himself for the purpose of increasing her sufferings.

She had always in her prayer, as Father Camaccio informs us, earnestly begged of God that he would conduct her by the way of tribulations and not by that of heavenly delights: and hence seeing herself now at last heard, it seemed that she should have rejoiced at it. But as God ordained, two grievous fears assailed her at the very moment. In regard to men she was afraid lest she should appear to them troublesome and annoying on account of her melancholy, or of losing in speaking her usual affability and meekness: and in respect to God she feared, lest she had merited on account of her sins, that the Lord should withdraw himself from her, and therefore she regarded as the chastisement of a guilty and ungrateful soul, that which the Lord had permitted in his other servants to render them stronger and more generous in his love. In this manner, deprived of every interiour con-

solation, and besides this fearful of not being pleasing to her Spouse, the more faithfully she advanced in the love of God, and hence in perfection and virtue, so much the more she turned this love itself into a terrible martyrdom.

To crown the series of her troubles, she was unexpectedly deprived of Father John Camaccio her confessor, in whom she had placed all her confidence. God permitted that the Superiours of the Society, being at some variance of opinion with regard to the daily communions of Mary Ann, should judge it advisable to change his residence and send him to labour in another College far from Quito. By this unforseen accident the servant of God found herself in a double abyss of trouble and affliction, first because it seemed to her that she had been the cause of the Father's removal, and secondly because by his departure she had lost an experinced director who, having regulated her conscience from her tender years, could then, more than any one else, afford her assistance and comfort. Nevertheless, conquering herself by an act of pure virtue, she submitted with heroic resignation to the divine will, and was perfectly ready to continue without any solace to her

death in that state of affliction. Father Camacio being gone, she took Father Monosalvas for her confessor, who had already many times directed her in her spiritual concerns; and she was just beginning to breathe a little, when she was also deprived of him, being called to a distant place to perform various services for the glory of God. She finally selected Father Luigi Vasquez, Rector of the University of Quito, a wise and learned man, but not at all suited to have the direction of her soul. He guided her by a way not adapted to the interiour dispositions in which she actually was, nor applicable to her present wants; and she suffered herself to be directed by him, and obeyed him to the very letter in every thing, although he was well aware and saw by experience that the bitterness of her spirit and her interiour desolations daily increased. She shed burning tears, begging light and assistance not to go astray in such a state of uncertainty, and in the midst of such palpable darkness; and at last God, moved to pity at the afflictions of his faithful servant, after so long an experiment, consoled her, making her hear one night, whilst she was in the act of praying, these clear and distinct words:

"Go to the church of the Jesuits, as is your custom; and speak and open your whole interiour to the first religious, who will enter the church by the door of the chapel of St. Xavier. He will be your spiritual father and assist you."

It was hardly day before Mary Ann hastened to the church, and having placed herself upon her knees opposite the door of the Sacristy, which was contiguous to the chapel of St. Francis Xavier, saw a lay-brother, after a few minutes, enter the church by that door, a man of much simplicity and of great perfection, who was well known all over the city. By means of the Sacristan she requested to speak with him, but he excused himself, saying, that "he could not talk to her without the permission of his Superiour." This very reply confirmed her more and more that he must be the one whom God has destined to be her guide and master in the affairs of her soul: and therefore having immediately obtained the permission of the Superiour of the College, she unfolded to him standing, just as he was, in one corner of the church, her state, opening her whole soul to him. The good brother, upon hearing such extraordinary acts of virtue and perfection, was so much consoled

and out of himself, that returning to the Sacristy he could not refrain from exclaiming in the fervour of his joy—"Oh, how admirable is God in his Saints! This young lady is nothing less than another St. Catharine of Sienna; she is an angel in flesh." And this is that brother Ferdinando della Croce, whom God, in the secrets of his wisdom, has selected to be the director of a soul so dear to and beloved by him. From the very first interview they contracted that interiour communication of soul, which afterwards continued to the death of Mary Ann. It seemed at first to many a very strange thing, and not at all according to the rules of human prudence; but in the end all agreed in admiring the wonderful dispositions of Almighty God, who oftentimes makes use of means in appearance the weakest and most unfit to accomplish great things, and selects the simple and the humble of heart to confound the pride of the wise of this world.

And as for Mary Ann, she was so consoled from that first and brief conversation she had with Ferdinando, that all her darkness was immediately dissipated, every anxiety banished, and her former serenity of mind and peace of

heart again restored to her. But it will be better to hear herself in her letter to Father Monosalvas: "God," said she, "is a good consoler of the poor and the desolate. May he be forever blessed: Amen. My Father, ever since I advised with brother Ferdinando della Croce about the affairs of my soul, I am leading a very joyful life, and his words have afforded me much consolation. The fact is, my Father, he is a Saint. I only confess to Father Vasquez. God has so ordained it: who can resist him? May his will be done." And in another letter to the same Father she adds—"I treat the concerns of my soul with brother Ferdinando della Croce, and he gives me much consolation. His only desire is that I be a Saint, and that I be well grounded in the virtue of humility, in order to mount to the summit of perfection by the steps of faith, hope and charity. It is a common saying, that he who treats with a wise man will soon be wise: this brother is a Saint." Thus she wrote with her own hand.

Then after having returned infinite thanks to Almighty God for having at length deigned to look down upon her with a favourable eye, she gave a very minute account to Ferdinando of

every thing that had taken place, up to that hour, in her soul; explaining to him all her exercises of piety, her penances, her method of prayer and the favours she received from God. She submitted to his approval her diary, or the distribution of the hours and the actions of the day; and in every thing she abandoned herself to his guidance and direction, not wishing, if it were possible, to move so much as a step without the consent of Brother Ferdinando. She used, therefore, to ask permission for the smallest things, and she did not dare to follow her own will in any thing. If afterwards the least doubt occurred to her mind, when at home, whether she ought to undertake or leave off any thing, she never wished to use her own judgment, but wrote the matter briefly upon paper and sent it to her director, and in the meantime awaited his reply.

This minuteness in the exercise of virtue, which, to the eyes of the prudent of the world, who have no idea of perfection, will seem more like littleness of mind, is so pleasing to God that he sometimes rewards it with evident miracles. D. Maria Arias testified in the process that, "being one evening in the apartment of

Mary Ann, and some doubt occurring to her mind how she should act in an affair of little consequence, the servant of God took a pen in her hand and wrote a note asking the advice of her director. The hour being late, D. Maria was anxious to find out who would carry that note to the College of the Jesuits; and she affirmed upon oath that, without having seen any person start from the house nor any one return to it, in a short time she found in the hands of Mary Ann the answer written by Brother Ferdinando della Croce, and which was read in her presence." And she added, that "out of the respect she entertained for the sanctity of the servant of God, she dared not question her how it had happened: but that she was fully persuaded that God wished by this miracle to authenticate the perfect subjection and dependence which she professed towards her director."

CHAPTER XII.

THE LOVE AND DEVOTION OF THE BLESSED MARY ANN FOR THE MOST AUGUST TRINITY, FOR THE MYSTERIES OF THE LIFE OP CHRIST, FOR THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN AND HER PATRON SAINTS.

CERTAIN works of piety, which we call devotions, which assist to keep the mind elevated above material things, and the heart united to God, are also parts of prayer. And although to some they may seem to be things of little moment, still seeing them not only practiced but strongly recommended by the Saints, we ought to set a high value on them, at least with respect to the source from which they take their rise, which is wont to be charity and religion. Mary Ann had also hers, and she practiced them during the whole course of her life.

And in the first place, she always honoured, as we have signified in many places, with an especial veneration the most august mystery of the adorable Trinity. She was particularly devout to the three divine persons, and as if they

were present to her corporeal eyes, paid them the most profound acts of adoration. Every day she recited on her knees and with her arms extended in the form of a cross, the Apostles' creed thirty times, enlivening her faith in the most holy Trinity, and thanking him for the immense benefits conferred upon men. In the solemn commemoration which the church makes every year of this mystery, she passed many hours in its contemplation; she adorned in the best manner she could her domestic little altar, and invited her relatives and nieces to enter her apartment, and there recite some devout prayers.

Being particularly devoted to all the mysteries which related to the life and passion of Jesus Christ, she had frequently in her mouth and often repeated the following ejaculatory prayer: "Blessed be the hour in which my Lord Jesus Christ took human flesh, was born, died, and rose again, ascended into heaven, and in which he instituted the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist." For the solemnity of Christmas she prepared herself every year by a devout novena, accompanied with severe penances and mortifications: and she caused all the domestics to do the same in the best manner they could

As that holy night drew near, Mary Ann could not contain her joy. She passed it before a representation of the manger, either in singing devout hymns in honour of the new-born babe, which she accompanied with a stringed instrument, or in pouring forth the warmest and most tender affections of her amorous heart. And with good reason, for it is said that the divine Infant sometimes favoured her with his presence and allowed himself to be seen and tenderly caressed by her. In proof of it I will here relate a fact which I find recorded in the process of beatification.

Cosimo di Salazar, son of the niece of D. Giovanna di Casso, when he was quite a young child, once entered Mary Ann's apartment, and beginning to run about the rooms with childish liberty, chanced to espy his aunt, who was wholly taken up with her eyes fixed upon a beautiful little Infant, which she was holding in her arms. The child at this sight immediately turned back and ran to call his mother, that she might come and see his aunt, who was caressing a little child. D. Giovanna knew very well that the servant of God was alone, and therefore having strong suspicions of what was really the case. softly

entered Mary Ann's rooms, in order to examine every thing very carefully, but unfortunately she met Mary Ann coming out, who perhaps from having overheard the words of the young Cosimo, dreaded a discovery, and therefore was very anxious to conceal the fact, who said to her—"Why do you suffer little boys to enter my rooms?" Her niece pretended not to have understood her; and turning back she began to question her son minutely about the thing, in order to find out what child it was that he had seen his aunt holding in her arms, and he with wonderful simplicity and innocence pointing with his little hand to a frame, in which the most Blessed Virgin, with the child Jesus in her arms, was painted, said to his mother that "that was the very child whom his aunt was pressing to her bosom:" thus from the mouth of the innocent child, incapable of feigning or of telling a lie, was discovered the great favour conferred by Almighty God on his beloved servant.

I shall say nothing of her vehement love towards the passion of the Redeemer, and the most blessed Eucharist, having already written enough upon these points in the course of this

history. From the former, in which she contemplated the excessive love of the Son of God, who carried his love so far as to give his body and blood for the salvation of men, she learnt how to return the love of one who had subjected himself for love of her to unheard of ignominies and torments; and from the other, in which is contained the fountain itself, and the author of life and grace, she imbibed strength and vigour for soul and body to advance and increase every day in perfection and a more intimate union with God.

In proportion to the love which she bore to the Son of God, was her devotion towards his most holy Mother. She imbibed it, we may say, with her milk, and increased in it, always giving new proofs of her affection. She recited every morning by herself, as we saw in her distribution of time, the holy Rosary; and in the evening she repeated it over again with the family. Every day also she recited the whole of the little office of the Virgin, divided into separate parts, and gave to each part the time and hour prescribed for it. For all the festivals of our Lady she prepared herself with extraordinary fervour, and increased her prayers and penances;

and on the festival itself she distributed to the poor, with the permission of her brother-in-law, more abundant alms. There was in the street, opposite to one of the windows of her apartment, a devout chapel dedicated to the most Blessed Virgin called of the angels, to which Mary Ann frequently turned, imploring her blessing from a distance, and to whom she paid her devotions. She sent every Saturday to this chapel two wax candles and several boquets of flowers; and in order not to be discovered, she made use of an Indian woman, who secretly carried this pious offering. She succeeded in keeping the thing a secret for some time; but at last, the sacristan being moved by the desire of finding out the person who regularly sent that present, one Saturday cautiously followed the Indian, and having seen her enter the house of Mary Ann, went in after her, and presenting himself before the servant of God, gave her a thousand thanks. But she, interrupting him in the middle of his discourse, "May God grant us," said she, "his grace and knowledge to serve his Blessed Mother; happy is the man who serves so great a Lady:" and having said this, she politely took her leave without wishing to hear

anything further. In the church of the Jesuits she passed long hours before an altar of our Lady of Loretto; and she experienced such sensible delight that she seemed unable to tear herself away from it. She often spoke of Mary with such spiritual delight and tenderness of affection, that it was evident the mouth spoke from the abundance of the heart. My Queen, my Mistress, my Mother, Virgin of Virgins, and such like were the glorious titles dictated by her tender love towards the most holy Virgin; and when uttering them her whole face would become inflamed, her eyes sparkle, and her whole person so agitated, that she excited in every one who heard or saw her, fervorous sentiments of piety and devotion. Whatever graces she afterwards desired, she obtained them all by directing her supplications to this divine Mother. To every one also who professed himself her servant, she gave assurance that his petitions would be heard.

The proof of it, she said, she had experienced in her own case from childhood. Whilst she was still quite a young child, a disease settled on one of her fingures, which, besides causing her intolerable pain, threatened to terminate

in a gangrene. D. Scolastica perceiving it, advised her to attend to it and call in the assistance of a surgeon. But the servant of God, with a joyful countenance, told her not to make herself uneasy about her, that there would be no need of so much trouble: after this, agitated by an interiour spirit which moved her, she rose and added:—"Wait a little, and you will see how I will cure it." Saying this, she knelt down before an image of the most Blessed Virgin, and full of confidence, asked her assistance in her present need; that was enough, for in an instant every sign of the ulcer disappeared, and her finger was perfectly cured. She herself was astonished at the quick and evident miracle, and warmly begged her friend to keep it secret.

Another time the humours that collected in her eyes caused her such a sharp and sensible pain that she was in great danger of going blind. Various remedies were applied to them; which, in place of giving any relief, tended only to increase the merit of her sufferings. She then had recourse, as was her custom, to the patronage of the most Blessed Virgin, and calling D. Scolastica, she asked her to place a pious image upon her eyes. And the fact was, that

at the very touch every vestige of the obstinate humour immediately disappeared.

Finally she cherished an especial affection for the patriarch St. Joseph, the chaste Spouse of Mary, for her Angel Guardian, St. Ignatius of Lyola, St. Francis Xavier, and the holy Virgins SS. Ursula, Gertrude and Teresa of Jesus. Above all she was extremely devout to St. Catharine of Sienna, whom she purposed specially to imitate, as St. Rose of Lima, her model, had done, and she knew her whole life so well by heart that she could point out and relate the smallest incident mentioned in it. An attentive reading of the lives of her patron Saints, in order to imitate them, was one of her most pleasing and ordinary occupations. True it is, that when in the course of her reading she chanced to come across extraordinary and supernatural graces, and especially when she read of visions and revelations she passed them by, saying, that such things were not for her, who ought to walk in an humble and lowly path, and attend only to the acquisition of solid virtue. And this much will suffice to prove what we asserted at the heading of this chapter.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ZEAL OF THE BLESSED MARY ANN FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS. HER STRATAGEMS TO BRING BACK TO A BETTER LIFE THOSE WHO HAD GONE ASTRAY. REMARKABLE CONVERSION OF A NOBLE INDIAN LADY. HER CHARITY TO RELIEVE THE TEMPORAL WANTS OF HER NEIGHBOUR CONFIRMED BY ALMIGHTY GOD WITH MIRACLES.

A LIFE wholly devoted to recollection, to prayer, to the interiour culture of the soul, such as we have hitherto described in that of the Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus, may seem that it might not, or would not have leisure or time, and perhaps not even the inclination to labour for the good of others. But as true charity towards God is never separated from a sincere love towards our neighbour, so it is peculiar to those who are truly pious, as was the case with Mary Ann, to make use of every exertion and means to procure advantage to others, according to their state and condition in life. She was not content with the prayers and penances which she offered up every day to God for the conversion of infidels, heretics and sinners of

every description, but she actively interested herself in it to gain these objects.

And commencing with the household, she first of all took charge of the servants, teaching them the mysteries of faith, and diligently instructing them in every thing which regarded the obligations and duties of a Christian life. After this, by her winning manners, she induced both masters and servants to frequent the holy Sacraments of confession and communion every Sunday and solemn festival of the year; a thing very rare in those days, and therefore doubly difficult for her to bring about. The day before she herself informed them that the day following would be the day for communion; and the better to prepare the more ignorant of the family, she would assemble them all together, and make them fervourous exhortations, exercising them in lively acts of faith, hope and charity. When she chanced to discover any grievous fault committed by any one of the house, after weeping over it before God and severely punishing it in herself, she undertook to repair it, correcting the guilty one with such love, and at the same time so effectually, that she drew from them sentiments of compunction and resolutions of amendment. It may be seen

from a single fact, which I shall here relate, how much she strove to bring back to the path of duty the souls of her domestics.

Mary Ann had taken into her service a poor young girl, more for the sake of preserving her from the many dangers to which she was exposed than that she had any need of her; and she endeavoured to improve her heart and instil into it lively sentiments of piety. But the girl, although she had continually before her eyes bright examples of virtue, instigated by the devil and her passions, suffered herself to be drawn away from her good resolutions and fell into a serious fault; and at the same time conceived such an aversion, and as it were hatred, for her mistress that, unable to endure the idea of appearing before her again, thought about abandoning her and of flying away secretly. Wherefore, one night, after getting every thing ready for her intended flight, she was already on her way in the dark towards the staircase, when whom should she meet but Mary Ann, who had come out of her apartment contrary to her usual custom, and who requested her to get her a light and come along with her. The girl obeyed, and artfully dissembling her artifice, followed her mistress, who, when she was come

into her room, made her sit down by her side, and in the kindest manner asked her why she was so interiourly disturbed, and whither she thought about going at that late hour? It would seem but natural, that seeing the guilty intention which was concealed in her mind, and which was known to none but God, discovered, it would have been sufficient to have brought her back to her right senses: but the fact was, that becoming worse at such a manifestation of the divine mercy, she obstinately denied every thing, and merely said that she was unable to continue longer in her service. Then Mary Ann spoke in plainer terms, telling her that she should reflect well on the step she was about to take, and not suffer herself to be blinded by passion; that she should beware of that which is the consequence of sin, viz: anxiety of mind, remorse of conscience, enmity with God, eternal sufferings; that she had always loved her as her laughter, and that she did not deserve, after all the marks of love she had shown her, to be so vilely abandoned by her. She then embraced her with many expressions of affection, and said, "Ah, why will you then abandon me? Why will you forsake me?" The girl was moved at such manifestation of affection, but

not changed in mind; and that very same night, doing violence to herself, she left the house and miserably abandoned herself to a licentious and dissolute life. It was well for her that her kind mistress never ceased to offer up her prayers and penances to Almighty God, till at last she obtained her sincere conversion, as she herself afterwards deposed to the glory, as well as in gratitude for the charity, of Mary Ann.

The efficacy of the prayers and words of the servant of God was so well known throughout the city, that to overcome the obstinacy of the most hardened sinners they recurred to her as to their last resort. A young man who had led a very bad and scandalous life, fell grievously sick, lost the use of his senses, and was dying in the public hospital, without being able to make his confession. Mary Ann was informed of the dangerous state of his soul; and she after a short prayer obtained for him the recovery of his senses, to enable him to receive the last Sacraments, which he did with sentiments of true compunction, and then departed this life. An Indian woman also, by name of Giovanna di Sanguera, a Moor by birth and a slave by condition, found in Mary Ann a remedy and an escape from a wretched life and a worse death,

which her barbarous husband wished to inflict on her. He ran about like a madman in search of his wife to kill her, and having understood that she was hearing mass in the church of the Jesuits, he went thither immediately, carrying a dagger in his hand. His wife no sooner perceived him coming in, than reasonably fearing for her life, she ran to place herself near the servant of God, imploring her assistance and mercy. Mary Ann immediately rose to her feet, and advancing towards the savage wretch, said to him in a gentle tone, "Calm yourself, O son. What are you thinking to do with that dagger? Do you not see the horrible crime which you are about to perpetrate?" And she went on blending so much sweetness and charity with her words, at one time reprehending for his sacriligious attempt, then persuading him to enter into himself, that she succeeded in calming his fury, and causing him to become as meek as a lamb. After this she comforted the still trembling woman, and told her to lay aside all fear and return home, because from thenceforward she would never have the least occasion of complaint against her husband, as in fact it turned out.

More remarkable still was the change effected

in D. Maria Duchizela, who, after leading a loose and unconstrained life, became very modest and religious. She was an Indian by birth, but of the most noble blood, being a descendant of the royal family of the Incas, who once governed the country round Quito. She was very punctilious in point of honour, and being proud of her beauty and the abundance of her earthly goods, she exhibited more pomp and show than if she were really a queen. Being come to Quito for the purpose of settling some disputes in the tribunal of the Royal Audience, she chanced, upon a certain festival to hear mass in the chapel of our Lady of the Angels, which was opposite, as we said, the house of Mary Ann. The exteriour of the young lady was one of pride, her dress was of the most costly material, her head and neck were adorned with flowers, gold and pearls, and the very air was impregnated around her with perfumes and sweet odours. She seemed to have come thither for the purpose of attracting attention, and not for paying her adoration to her God. By good luck Mary Ann was passing by the chapel, on her way to the church of the Jesuits, and hearing the sound of the little bell, at the time of the elevation, immediately stopped and knelt down

near D. Maria, whom she had never known or seen before, and continued praying till the end of mass. And when this was over she turned to the young lady, and in the sweetest manner asked her name and whence she came. The other with equal affability told her that her name was Maria, that she came from Parequis, her native place, whither she would return in the course of fifteen days. Then Mary Ann seizing the good opportunity replied, that "she congratulated her upon the beautiful name that had fallen to her lot; that she should consequently strive to nourish a special devotion to the Queen of Angels, endeavouring to imitate her virtues. Above all, she should beware of wasting and throwing away such endowments of beauty and mind with which she had been enriched, but should rather consecrate them to God, studying to please him alone and not the world, which is a traitor and abandons us in our greatest need. As to your returning to your country after fifteen days," she added with a smile, "perhaps, Signora, it may not be so: the most Blessed Virgin will inform you." Having said this, she courteously saluted her and took her leave. The affability and modesty of the servant of God so gained upon the heart of D.

Maria, that she was hardly gone before she asked those near her who that person was; and having been informed that she was Mary Ann of Jesus, a most innocent and holy virgin, of whom she had heard so many things by report, she burnt with a desire of seeing her again, and of becoming better acquainted with her; and immediately went in pursuit of her to the church of the Jesuits, and placing herself at her side, whispered to her "to be pleased to recommend her to God." Mary Ann replied that "she had already done so, and would do so again: in the meantime," she added, "let your ladyship open your ears to the interiour voice by which Almighty God calls you to his service." This was the second and last time she spoke to her, for the servant of God shortly after fell sick and died: but her words remained so deeply engraven upon the heart of the lady, that, as she herself afterwards confessed, they were the cause of her renouncing every vanity of the world, and of giving herself entirely to God. Nor was the sacrifice small which it cost her to carry out her good resolution; for from a state of opulence she was reduced to almost absolute beggary, and had to break off, at the same time, so many dangerous friendships contracted. live

far away from her native land, abandon her relatives, and renounce all the advantages and conveniences of life. She generously trampled under foot every worldly consideration; despised the honours and vanities of the world, overcome all opposition, and triumphed over her very nature, for from being of a very haughty and choleric disposition, which would sometimes cause her to faint and lose the use of her senses through excess of anger, she became in this regard, by the continual practice of mortification, as one that was insensible and dead. She never returned to her country, as it had been foretold her; but following the counsel given her by Mary Ann of Jesus, to place herself under the direction of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, towards whom she at first felt, without knowing why, a natural aversion, she continued in Quito to her death, and led a truly exemplary and holy life. Not content with that, in order to repair the scandals which she had given, she took upon herself the care of collecting poor, orphan and destitute girls, whose virtue was endangered, and having given an asylum to forty of them in her own house, she maintained them all on the alms she begged from the pious, on the profit which she drew from the labour

of her own hands, and carefully instructed them in Christian piety and good morals. Finally, in the many and frequent misfortunes of poverty, sickness and persecutions which she encountered, she found no better aid than by recurring to the intercession of Mary Ann, then happy in heaven, and receiving from her comfort and succour even with evident and stupendous miracles, which would require too much of our time to relate here in detail.

For the sake of brevity I pass over other facts in proof of the zeal which our Saint had for the salvation of souls; and I come now to say something of her compassion for the corporal necessities of her neighbours. From the time she was a little child, as was said before, there was nothing that pleased her more than to distribute with her own hand alms to the poor, who came every day to the door of the house. And her parents, who were inclined to assist the poor, delighted to observe in their daughter the same desire, furnished her every day with an abundance of bread to distribute amongst the poor. And she did it with such a grace and interiour joy of soul, that afterwards, when she came to live in the house of her sister, she not only did not leave off this charitable occupation,

but added to it. For besides teaching the first rudiments of the Christian doctrine to all those miserable beings, who assembled every day to receive alms from her, she took the most filthy and ragged of them aside, and with her own hands fixed their dress, cleaned and combed them. It was certainly a moving spectacle, and many came to witness it, to behold a young lady, belonging to one of the first families, well educated and refined, whose very nature abhorred every species of uncleanness, exercising herself with so much love, as if she were a maid-servant, in those vile and low offices, besides being loathsome, and generously overcoming every natural repugnance.

From the time she consecrated herself to God by vows, and became voluntarily poor for the love of God, she could never dispose of any thing as her own: but as charity is wonderfully industrious, it taught her the way of strictly observing her vow of poverty, and at the same time of showing herself liberal and generous to the poor. She asked and obtained permission of her relatives to bestow every day that portion of food which would have fallen to her share, and which she never eat. Besides this, all the profit which she gained from the labour

of her hands, she distributed, with the consent of her confessor, among the poor, and especially to the bashful, or to families that were once in easy circumstances but then reduced. In like manner she maintained for several years some destitute widows, several little girls who were in danger, and a good priest who had lost the use of reason in consequence of the poison given him to drink by the infidels, among whom he had laboured, and who had been brought back to Quito and was living in extreme want. Wherefore the needy of every description confidently applied to Mary Ann as to their mother; and in order not to disturb her during the day from her usual exercises of devotion, they were accustomed, from the public street, to throw a pebble at the shutter of a window, which overlooked a less frequented alley, and which she always purposely kept closed. This was sufficient to make her cast down immediately to the poor whatever might happen to come to her hand.

It happened not unfrequently that God concurred to stamp the charity of his sevant with manifest prodigies, a few of which I shall here set down. It would frequently occur, that after having distributed to the poor all that had been assigned by the family for them, either new

comers would arrive, or on account of the very great number, not a few would remain, who had been unable to obtain any thing. Mary Ann was sensibly afflicted; and her compassionate heart not suffering her to send any one away empty-handed, full of confidence she was seen to re-enter her apartment, and after a short time come forth again with a basket full of the whitest bread in her hand. The domestics frequently witnessed this and agreed together to watch attentively and see who brought her the bread. But all their diligence was to no purpose: and they were obliged to conclude that God miraculously furnished it.

Whenever they made bread at home, our Saint hastened to give her labour, wishing with her own hands to knead a certain quantity, which she afterwards distributed to a poor family, consisting of three marriageable daughters, in whom she took much interest, on account of the danger in which they were of going astray, from the extreme poverty to which they were reduced. She never ceased from her laborious task, notwithstanding the opposition of the domestics, who considered such a drudgery unbefitting her. After having, together with them, kneaded the dough, she took from the

mass a small quantity, which, as the witnesses affirmed, scarcely weighed about two ounces; and she worked it so that she formed of it a loaf more perfect and whiter than the rest, and when it was baked it weighed at least thirty ounces. At first those of the house were filled with wonder, but afterwards seeing the same thing occurring every time, they spoke of it as a continued and ordinary prodigy, and therefore it no longer excited any surprise in them.

The following fact is also confirmed in the juridical depositions. Her brother-in-law, as well as her sister, had many times given to Mary Ann full power to take from the dispensary and granary whatever she wanted for the relief of the poor: and the servant of God, availing herself of this pious liberality of her relatives, frequently took from the one and the other place abundant alms. After some time their curiosity was excited to see how much she took, but in spite of all their scrutiny they could never perceive that a single particle of any thing was missed. At which D. Cosimo mildly expostulated with her, as if she doubted the sincerity by which he and his wife gave her full liberty to use their property as she chose for the benefit of the poor. Mary Ann replid to

him in a very bland and gay manner, and told him to "give himself no uneasiness on this account, for she and her poor were well satisfied with their charity; that in the meantime he should return thanks to Almighty God, if in recompense of their charity they missed nothing." This much she said, and then was silent. This was enough to show that God by a miracle replaced that quantity, which his servant had taken, as necessity required, and distributed to the needy.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUPERNATURAL GIFTS IMPARTED TO THE BLESSED MARY ANN BY ALMIGHTY GOD. SHE SEES HIDDEN AND DISTANT THINGS, AND PREDICTS THE FUTURE. SHE MIRACULOUSLY HEALS MANY PERSONS OF MORTAL DISTEMPERS AND RECALLS A DEAD WOMAN TO LIFE.

THESE were not the only acts of Mary Ann which surpassed the bounds of nature, and by which it pleased Almighty God to illustrate her name and honour her merits and sanctity. Although she continually asked of him the grace of never being privileged or distinguished with

extraordinary gifts and favours of this kind; nevertheless Almighty God, as a reward for such humility, and for the glory of his sacred name, frequently wished to exalt her in the eyes of men; and besides these instances which we have already mentioned, the following may serve as a confirmation.

Our Saint had hardly passed to a better life than D. Giovanna, her niece, immediately recollected every thing that had been told her, when Mary Ann, by order of her confessor, had unfolded to her the inmost secrets of her soul. Among the other things, one was that Jesus Christ frequently allowed himself to be seen by her in the consecrated host, under the appearance of a lovely Infant, filling her with unspeakable joy; and that sometimes she tasted the ineffable delights of paradise, when she received holy communion, it seeming to her that she sensibly received the holy Infant within her heart.

Besides this, she had the gift of seeing hidden and distant things, as if they were under her eyes and present, as also of pronouncing with uncertainty on the future events. Many facts of this kind are related in the process of beatification, some few of which it will be sufficient for me to select as specimens of the rest; and I

shall have more regard for variety than any particular arrangement of facts. She wrote a letter to Father Antonio Monosalvas, who was at the time in Riobamba, a city about thirty leagues distant from Quito, and in it she said to him: "That knowing for certain that he was shortly to come to Quito, she took the liberty of sending him a small quantity of biscuits to serve for his journey." There was then no reason, nor any order why the Father should depart thence; but a few days afterwards a very serious accident occurred, on account of which the city council deliberated about sending a wise and prudent person to Quito to transact their business, and by common consent the choice fell upon Father Monosalvas, who had scarcely reached the capital before he went to see Mary Ann, and wished to know from her how she obtained the information of his unexpected destination. She told him frankly as to her confessor: "My Divine Spouse knows every thing, and he also knew of your coming here. From him I had the information, and therefore I sent to your Reverence that small quantity of biscuit." Thus she spoke, and she added: "that when he would have returned to Riobamba he would have to undergo a very severe tribula-

tion, but that he should not be afraid, for God would soon console him, as in fact it happened, and as he himself testified in the juridical process.

Antonio de Paz being mortally wounded, Catharine his mother ran immediately to the servant of God, both to inform her of the sad accident as well as to receive from her some consolation and comfort. But scarcely had Mary Ann seen her than suddenly, with great commiseration, "I know already," said she, "why you come: but there is no time to be lost; make him go to confession immediately and receive the last Sacraments, as he will soon die; and let this misfortune be to you an exercise of much patience, and an entire resignation to the will of God." After hearing this the disconsolate mother quickly returned home and frankly told the reply of Mary Ann to the sick man: and he, without more ado, prepared himself for death with true sentiments of Christian piety. As soon as he was dead Catharine went again to the servant of God, but the hour being late, and finding the doors of the house already closed, she threw a pebble at the window, at which Mary Ann immmediately made her appearance, and before the other could speak—"I know

already, Catharine," said she, "that you come pierced with grief for the death of Antonio your son. But don't afflict yourself, rather give many thanks to the Lord, because he is in a place of safety."

Still more wonderful, on account of the circumstances connected with it, was the prediction which she made of his approaching death, to a man in the bloom of health and of a perfectly sound constitution. This man having for several years led a dissolute life, at last being ashamed of himself, desired to rise from the state of sin, but from the habit which he had contracted did not know how to come to the resolution of breaking off at once the occasion of it. By good luck God put it into his heart to have recourse to Mary Ann; and having waited for her one morning when she was going to the church, with all humility and candour he explained to her his need, and prayed her to be pleased to recommend him to God. She replied that she would do so willingly, and promised to offer up her holy communion for him that very morning. When on her return home, a little before noon, she chanced to meet that poor miserable man in the street again, who asked her, if she had obtained the grace for him which he desired?

She then raised her eyes to heaven, and standing for some time recollected, told him these precise words: "Sir, although I feel a delicacy in speaking, nevertheless, as it too nearly concerns your eternal salvation, I will speak with all sincerity. Prepare yourself without delay to die, for within eight days you shall have rendered an account of your life to Jesus Christ." The man was thunder struck to hear such an unexpected intimation; afterwards taking courage, he returned to his own home, where, being suddenly seized with a mortal distemper, he survived precisely eight days, which he spent in continual tears and acts of sincere repentance, when, having received the last Sacraments, he died with great signs of predestination.

In the same manner she predicted to Catharine Peralto, a little girl of six years of age, and daughter of D. Giovanna her niece, that she would never marry, because God wished her for himself, and destined her for a life of no ordinary sanctity: as it afterwards turned out, in spite of the opposition of her father, who persisted in his resolution to give her a husband, and had already made all the necessary preparations. She took the religious habit among the bare-footed Carmelites, where she lived and

died in the odour of sanctity. D. Giovanna had another son by name of Cosimo; the very one who, as we said before, saw Mary Ann with the Infant Jesus in her arms. Being of an extremely lively and restless disposition, and fearing one day for some childish fault he had committed, of being chastised by his father, he fled for protection into Mary Ann's apartment which by chance he found open. The father overtook him there, and would have punished him on the spot, had not the servant of God interposed by telling him that Cosimo would one day become quite a different person, and she went security for him. And the fact was, that the youth, as if he had changed his nature, became very grave and sedate, and a few years afterwards, bidding adieu to the world, he entered and lived a Religious in the Society of Jesus.

It would take too long were I to relate, one by one, the predictions made by the Blessed Mary Ann, which are deposed at length in the process of beatification. I cannot be silent here of one which was celebrated all over the city of Quito, and which was moreover accompanied with so many and such prodigious circumstances, that on this account also it is worthy to be known. One day Mary Ann was returning from

the church in company with her nieces, and they had gone but a few steps when the rain began to fall in torrents. Her companions, in order to protect themselves the best way they could, got close to the wall, under the eves of the houses and hastened their steps to procure shelter. But the servant of God, who was engrossed all the while in heavenly things, as if she were perfectly unconscious of what was passing around her, proceeded slowly along in the middle of the street, where there was a complete deluge which poured down in torrents from the roofs of the houses. When she entered the hall of the house, where her nieces, all wet and disordered, awaited her, her clothes as well as her feet appeared to be perfectly dry, although she had to walk in the midst of the torrent, which rushed down the declivity of the street. At the sight of her they looked at each other in amazement; and at the same time Mary Ann, becoming aware of their surprise, and still more of the prodigy which she could not conceal, anticipated them, saying with a sweet smile: "'Tis well; you are wet because you did not know how to walk. How is it? I have not had a single drop of water upon me, and you are so wet?" "But we had not," replied one of them, "as you, an angel who de-

fended us from the rain." Mary Ann blushed and quickly changed the conversation: but without being conscious of it, from one prodigy she passed to another, which was probably greater: for leaning against a little pillar, as if in the act of resting herself, "this house," said she, "will one day be the dwelling and monastery of barefooted Carmelites, nuns:" then going up stairs she invited her companions to accompany her through the house, and like one entranced, pointing now to one place, now to another, "here," she added, "will be the gate of the monastery, there the refectory and the kitchen; the church will be built on this side which faces the street; and the rooms which I occupy will be the choir. Oh, with what pleasure will the Carmelite nuns dwell in this place!" When she had said this she took her leave and shut herself up in her apartment. It would take too long to recount how, notwithstanding all the difficulties which were met with, a few years after her death, the words of Mary Ann were verified to the very letter. Suffice it to say, that some of her nieces were eye-witnesses of the fact, having become nuns in the very same monastery.

Many wonderful things are likewise related

in the juridical processes, which Almighty God operated by the prayers and the touch of Mary Ann, whilst she was still alive. She cured, in an instant, two of her nieces who were mortally sick, by only giving them to drink a sip of pure water. Another lady was suffering severely from a sore in her foot, which was beginning to mortify. She had herself brought from her country-seat where she dwelt, into the city and implored the assistance of Mary Ann. She only wet the sore with her saliva, and it was all that was required, for in a short time it was perfectly healed. She twice delivered her sister, D. Girolama, from imminent danger of death in two difficult cases of child-birth. D. Giovanna, niece of the servant of God, being obliged to leave the city for a short time, left in her charge a little daughter of three years of age, who, whilst playing in the court-yard, received such a terrible kick in the face from a mule that bruised and wounded, it fell to the ground without giving any signs of life. Mary Ann being informed of it immediately raised her eyes to heaven and said: "Oh, what account shall I give of this child to its parents?" She ordered her Indian servant to bring the child into her room, and shutting herself up, she remained in

prayer for about an hour; after that she came forth carrying the child in her arms perfectly sound, with only a very small scar remaining on the forehead where it had been struck.

Maria de Paredes deposed in the process the instantaneous cure of one of her daughters, in the following terms:—"Eleonora, daughter of the deponent, having fallen sick, and her life being entirely despaired of by the physicians, the deponent went with tears in her eyes to Mary Ann, to beg her to recommend her little daughter to God: and she consoled her with telling her not to be afflicted, for it would be nothing, and that she should give her a beverage composed of the dried leaves of roses, which had been upon the body of St. Rose of Lima: and having sent it, she gave it to the invalid to drink, who immediately recovered, and was so thoroughly cured, that from that time she never felt any symptom of her former disease."

Maria Rodriguez likewise attested under oath, "that an Indian woman, by the name of Beatrix, a slave of Giovanni Salazar, being in great danger from the labours of child-birth, in the house of the servant of God, Mary Ann of Jesus, the same Mary Ann came down to pay her a visit, and putting her hand on the head of the sufferer.

said :—'May it please the Lord to rescue you from this danger.' And hardly had she pronounced the words before the Indian was happily delivered. The child was immediately baptised, and afterwards died the same day. D. Giovanna di Casso, her niece, wished to inform the servant of God of it, and said to her, that the little negro was dead, for which she had stood sponsor: to whom Mary Ann replied, 'that it was born for heaven, and therefore God had taken it to himself.'"

Giovanna Peralta fell sick of a malignant fever; and after being reduced to the last extremity was visited by the Blessed Mary Ann, her relative, who, after consoling her with pious discourse, when on the point of leaving, "Courage," said she, "be of good heart, as you will not only not die of this sickness, but survive me a good while." The disease, however, instead of diminishing, became so alarming that Catharine, in order not to be present at the death of her sister, left the house and went to the church of the Jesuits, where she found the servant of God, who again confirmed what she had already said in regard to the cure of the sick person. But Catharine giving little credit to it, asked her boldly how she could make her that promise

with so much assurance? And she replied, "I can, on the promise the most Holy Virgin has made me." Catharine, hearing this reply, returned immediately home, and, to her great surprise, found her sister not only free from the fever but perfectly cured.

I shall close this chapter with the relation of a still more wonderful fact, which is to be found in the process. Two Indians, a man and his wife, lived in the house of Mary Ann; and for some time they lived happily and amicably together. After some years the husband having conceived an unjust and false suspicion of his wife, like a brute as he really was, determined without more ado to kill her. Wherefore, under pretence of being obliged to cut wood, he took her with him to a mountain near Quito, and there, in the heart of the forest, bound her tightly to a tree, and having beaten her unmercifully with a knotted club, he put a halter round her neck, strangled her, and threw the corpse down a precipice from a high rock, in order to conceal for ever all traces of his crime. Mary Ann, wrapt in spirit, saw from her room all that had taken place in the distant woods. Calling to her a good tradesman, who kept his shop under her window, she begged him to go imme-

diately to the mountain, where, concealed by a certain cliff, which she pointed out, he would find a dead woman; and to take her up and convey her with all possible secrecy there to her room. The man obeyed; and as soon as Mary Ann had possession of the lacerated and bloody corpse, she raised her eyes to heaven, and applied to the throat, and the other affected parts, some rose leaves; and the Indian instantly began to breathe, and shortly after got up perfectly cured, with no other mark remaining except a very slight impression of the halter with which she had been strangled. The fact was soon spread abroad: and the nieces of the Saint interrogated the Indian to discover the truth. But she was unable to say more than that finding herself in the agonies of death, she seemed to see, as in a dream, Mary Ann of Jesus making towards her and promising assistance and succour.

CHAPTER XV.

THE INVINCIBLE PATIENCE AND PERFECT RESIGNATION OF THE BLESSED MARY ANN IN HER LONG AND PAINFUL INFIRMITIES. HER HEROIC FORTITUDE IN MORTIFYING HER THIRST REWARDED BY ALMIGHTY GOD WITH MIRACLES.

It will not be disagreeable to the reader, if before I proceed to give an account of the Blessed Mary Ann's precious death, I should set forth in this chapter and place before his eyes the wonderful examples, which she has left us, of perfect resignation and heroic patience in the course of her long and painful infirmities. She had to suffer much, especially during the last seven years of her life, from prostration of strength, fainting fits, swoons, burning fevers, and in the end from dropsy accompanied with dangerous symptoms. The pains alone of her stomach, which not unfrequently assailed her, were so acute and excessive that she herself did not hesitate to affirm in confidence to Father Fra. Girolama, her brother, and to Father Camaccio her confessor, that they would without doubt have deprived her of life, had they lasted

out for one full quarter of an hour. Notwithstanding all this, whether sick or well, she always maintained the same joyful and serene countenance, always the same sweetness and affability of manners. She continued as before to practice her ordinary penances, and to follow in every thing the distribution of time prescribed for her daily exercises. She could never be induced to take to her bed and put herself under the care of physicians, except when there was danger of death, or when she could no longer stand upon her feet. And on these occasions no one ever heard a single word of complaint, or a sigh indicative of the great sufferings which she endured—nay, the more her pains increased, the greater was her joy and exultation. She said that these were all so many caresses and delights sent her by her heavenly Spouse, and consequently that she was really blessed, because without any merit of her own she was made worthy of the divine complacency.

As sufferings and infirmities were esteemed by her as extraordinary graces and favours, we need not wonder if she changed them into and made them sources of enjoyment, in so much as to desire always to suffer more and more for the

love of her God. Being one day very much tormented with her pains, she threw herself into the arms of Maria Arias, her particular friend, and as if seeking for some relief, begged her to strike her with her hand between the shoulders, pretending that she felt some numbness there. The other obliged, firmly believing that she was alleviating her pains by so doing; but the truth was that she increased them beyond measure, as the servant of God had desired; for precisely in that part she had a frightful iron chain, the points of which were so embeded by the blows in her flesh that the physicians afterwards could with difficulty draw them out without tearing the flesh.

But where her heroic patience and mortification shine most conspicuous was in her last sickness, which was dropsy, and which afflicted her for many years. One of the ordinary effects of this disease is wont to be, as every body knows, an excessive and morbid thirst, which can never be allayed. Now Mary Ann, who never in the whole course of her life used any other beverage except pure water, and that also sparingly, when she was attacked by this new disease, and therefore stood in greater need than ever of quenching her thirst oftener, abstained on the contrary

more than ever from drink, in order to mortify the burning thirst with which she was consumed. It would seem perfectly incredible, but it is a fact which rests on the testimony of many witnesses, that she passed entire weeks, and once went as far as three months without tasting a drop of water. And if she did not die, as was but natural, of pure thirst, it was the grace and power of God which supported her life.

Great, therefore, was the torment which she endured; but the more acute and distressing it was, the dearer it was always to her. The very sight of water excited in her parched and burning body the most violent contortions, caused by the great desire which afflicted humanity felt to seek some refreshment. Notwithstanding all this, Mary Ann not only with heroic fortitude repressed every propensity and craving of nature, but to render her martyrdom more excruciating and her mortification more excessive, she would go to the bucket of water which she always kept in her rooms for this purpose, and filling a small vase she held it up before her eyes, and then slowly and little by little poured it back into the bucket. She was observed to do the same thing at a fountain, taking up the limped water, and then turn round and throw

it back into the basin. At the noise which the rain made in falling, the parched child would extend her body out of the window, and with her eyes and face turned towards heaven would give a thousand praises and thanks to God, for giving her that fine opportunity of mortifying her thirst. At other times making a cup of the hollow of her hands, she collected the rain which fell from the eaves of the roof; after that, opening them on a sudden, she let the water fall to the ground, as if offering it in sacrifice to God, in imitation of the holy prophet David. She was once surprised in this act by a lady who lived opposite to her dwelling, and who could not refrain from asking her for what purpose she stood admiring and collecting the water, if afterwards she made no use of it to quench her thirst? And the servant of God, blushing for shame, quietly replied that she did so to mortify herself a little, and then suddenly withdrew to her room. Another time being parched with thirst, and hearing the gurgling sound of a freshet, which ran in torrents through the streets from the late rains, with a sudden motion she exclaimed with a sigh—"Oh, that one could plunge herself into that water to allay a little her burning thirst!" A lady hearing

this who was present offered her immediately a glass of fresh water; but Mary Ann humbly thanking her for her charity refused the offering, and added: "because that exclamation escaped me, you must not imagine, madam, that I would drink this water. Think rather that I feel a real pleasure in associating in his last moments with my languishing Spouse, who, tormented also with thirst, died for me upon the cross." And if she was sometimes compelled by obedience or by extreme necessity to take a few sips of water, or to keep it a little while in her mouth to moisten her throat, she mixed so much gall and bitter substances with it that she rendered the taste of it intolerable. During the last day of her life, when she was very ill, she manifested her desire for a few fresh grapes. After much search a small bunch was found and brought to her; but she to irritate rather than for the sake of quenching her thirst, took but three single grapes, and then absolutely refused the remainder.

It happened sometimes that her dry and parched throat would become contracted and tightly closed for the want of necessary moisture: and then the only remedy she adopted, was to put little pieces of apple in her mouth and ex-

tract the juice. She did not very often use this mode of relief, on the contrary she very often refused it, or turned it to her greater mortification. She would take in her hand the finest looking and the best flavoured of the apples which were given her, look at them wistfully, and then hand them to her nieces, praying them to eat them in her presence, and thus cruelly torment her burning thirst with the sight of them eating. So great virtue merited to be rewarded by Almighty God with stupendous prodigies, one of which only I will here relate, as I find it deposed in the process. One day her confessor ordered Mary Ann that she should not taste a sip of drink of any kind for fifteen consecutive days. His intention was to see what impression a command so strange and contrary to all rules of prudence would make upon her, and what emotions and thoughts it would excite in her mind and heart; and then an hour after, when she would return to make her confession, he intimated to revoke the order, nay, to oblige her to take more frequent nourishment. But God, who wished to give us another example of her heroic obedience and perfect resignation, arranged it so that he forgot every thing about it. The obedient Mary Ann, without stopping to

reflect on the command she received, joyfully prepared herself to execute it to the very letter; and as for some days previous she had taken no refreshment, she began soon to feel all the dreadful effects and torments of a burning thirst. She could have easily rid herself of this suffering by merely stating her case to her confessor; but fearing to lose by so doing the merit of obedience, she was silent, and although every morning and frequently during the day she returned to see him, she never said a word to him about it. And she was on the very point of failing and of being reduced to the last extremity, when God, satisfied with the display of so much virtue, miraculously comforted and sustained her. A very heavy rain was falling; and Mary Ann, who felt an interiour anguish, went to the window and held out both hands joined together to catch the rain which fell, and afterwards to make of it, as was her custom, a pleasing holocaust, by throwing it on the ground without tasting a drop of it. No sooner however were the palms of both hands filled, than as if they had been a sponge, they miraculously imbibed and absorbed all the water she had collected. This happened to her great surprise, not once, but as long as she kept her hands extended, and

she felt her whole interiour cooled and her burning cease.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GREAT DESIRE WHICH THE BLESSED MARY ANN HAD OF DEATH. SHE OFFERS HERSELF TO GOD AS A VICTIM FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HER FELLOW-CITIZENS AND FALLS GRIEVOUSLY SICK. RECEIVES WITH THE MOST TENDER AFFECTION THE LAST SACRAMENTS, AND EXPIRES IN THE ARMS OF JESUS AND MARY, WHO DESCENDED FROM HEAVEN TO RECEIVE HER SOUL, WHOSE GLORY IS REVEALED TO BROTHER FERDINANDO DELLA CROCE.

A SOUL so disengaged from the things here below could not but pant with an ardent desire of flying quickly to the bosom of its God. Every time the conversation turned on death, the Blessed Mary Ann was observed to manifest the greatest joy, and her whole countenance to brighten with extraordinary consolation. The very sickness, the pains and the spasms of her body were also on this account unspeakably dear to her: for she hoped that at last they would so diminish her strength as to render her recovery

hopeless. Hence the many sighs and tears she shed, as if she had no greater pain than that of living, nor expected a greater grace than that of dying.

Thus she went on animating her hopes till the beginning of the year 1645, when it seemed she had by a supernatural light some certainty of her approaching dissolution. She began from that time to speak of it, at first obscurely, and afterwards in terms sufficiently clear to several of her more confidential friends. Moreover, the wonderful death which we have related in another place of D. Sebastiana her niece, which happened about this time, revived the desire of following her, and of speedily uniting herself to her in heaven. Likewise not a few, on the testimony of her confessors, deposed in the juridical process that in that secret colloquy which she had with her dying niece, she not only revealed to her the glory prepared for her in heaven, but added, that she should prepare the place for her, as she would follow her in a short time. The truth is, that but a few months intervened between the death of Sebastiana and that of Mary Ann. As therefore the twenty-six years, which Mary Ann spent upon this earth, were but a life of a continued sacrifice, so the

Lord was pleased that the last act of it should be in reality a holocaust, in virtue of which she offered herself up as a victim of charity for the relief and preservation of her fellow-citizens. The thing happened in this manner:—

In the year 1645 America was visited by a contagious disease, which laid waste many of the southern provinces. It made its appearance also in the city of Quito, and in a short time it spread itself, committing the most terrible havoc among every class of citizens, who daily fell victims to its fury. The churches and cemeteries were insufficient to contain the great number of the dead, and heaps of abandoned and unburied corpses were seen in the streets and in the environs of the city. To increase the universal dread frequent earthquakes were felt, which shook and overturned many villages and populous cities. Every body was in tears, in mourning and in confusion. It happened that on the 25th of March Father Alfonso Roxas, Mary Ann's confessor, was explaining the sacred scripture in the church of the Society, and at the end of his discourse, after describing, with much eloquence, the ruins of the city of Riobamba, that had just been destroyed by an earthquake he exhorted the people in strong

language to implore mercy and pardon of Almighty God, and to do penance, in order to avert those tremendous chastisements of the divine justice: after this, inflamed with an ardent charity, he made a public and solemn offering of his life to the Lord, beseeching him to accept it in satisfaction for the sins of the people. Mary Ann, who was present, was very much moved and affected at the Father's words, and being also carried away by an unusual fervour rose to her feet, and in the midst of the multitude, with few but animated words, offered her life to God, supplicating him to accept it as a holocaust for the common safety of her fellow-citizens. The Lord was pleased with the offering, and was appeased by the prayer of his beloved servant. The earthquakes immediately ceased, and the contagion decreased in proportion as Mary Ann's sickness increased, and at her death entirely disappeared.

As soon as she returned home she was assailed with a violent fever, and the dropsy, from which she had already suffered much, grew worse: and these two diseases accompanied with acute pains continued wearing her away for more than fifty-nine days. She never undressed nor took to her bed, except the last day of her life. It was a

most affecting sight to see her overwhelmed with sufferings, and nevertheless always with a serene countenance, and with a mind perfectly tranquil. She would admit no relief or comfort, wishing to die in the midst of pains for the love of her heavenly Spouse. That spirit of austere mortification and rigid penance, which were born, it may be said, with her, accompanied her to the last moment of her life. She never eat meat, nor took any food that was either delicate or even substantial. And although she was parched with an intolerable thirst, during all these fifty-nine days she never swallowed a drop of water. Once she yielded to the urgent entreaties of her sister and those present who assisted her, and took a mouthful of water, but after keeping it a little while in her mouth she spat it out without swallowing a drop of it. She was completely prostrate from the loss of strength, but still she never laid down, but remained at one time standing, at another time propped up on a little bed which D. Girolama her sister had brought into her room.

When the report of her dangerous illness was first circulated over the city, an immense number of every rank and condition anxiously hastened to see and speak with her for the last time. But

the humble servant of the Lord urgently be sought the domestics to allow no one to enter to visit her; desiring to be alone and to keep her mind continually fixed on God. Wherefore they were obliged to content themselves with coming as far as the door and making inquiries about her. Permission, however, could not be refused to Monsignor Fra. Pictro di Oviedo, Bishop of Quito, who, declaring it was his duty as pastor to visit one of his sick lambs, without more passed on and entered her room. The sick person at first was a little confused, and with tender expressions of affection and humility thanked him for such condescension. But the good prelate, when he witnessed the peace and tranquility of her soul, which seemed already to enjoy the happiness of heaven, could not withhold his tears; and when he was going to take his leave he suddenly stooped and took the invalid's hand and raised it to his lips as if to kiss it. But Mary Ann, perceiving his intention, hastily withdrew it, and could not be prevailed upon to permit it.

Her malady continuing to increase more and more, it was judged advisable to administer to her the holy viaticum. It was necessary to bring it from the cathedral, which was Mary Ann's

parish: but foreseeing that it would cause a great commotion among the people, under colour of not giving so much trouble to the priest, she prayed and begged so hard, that at last she succeeded in having it brought from the church of the hospital of the poor, which was quite near her residence. When the priest entered the room with the Blessed Sacrament in his hand, although her strength was entirely gone, she knelt down on the floor, and melting into a flood of tender tears, received with great fervour her Lord in the sacrament for the last time.

Three days previous to her death she lost the entire use of her tongue, as she had desired and asked of Almighty God. And she herself foretold this to Petronilla of St. Bruno, her good friend, before she took sick, who, expressing her surprise at it, asked her in confidence the occasion of it; and Mary-Ann with much simplicity replied to her in the following terms:—"My sister, that is not the time of discoursing about, but of being united with God; for there is then much to treat about with him, and it is better to speak with God than to speak about God." For the rest she was always self-possessed, and retained the free and perfect use of her other senses. Hence it was that to ask the aid and

advice of brother Ferdinando della Croce, her director, who never abandoned her in her last moments, she wrote on scraps of paper what she wished, and communicated by means of them all that passed in the interiour of her soul. On one of these papers she spoke thus:—"Mother St. Catharine of Sienna came to pay me a visit, and has shown me a most beautiful garland, with which I will be crowned at the hour of my death: and she told me that on Friday, between nine and ten o'clock at night, my Spouse and his Mother, my Mistress, the Queen of Heaven, are to descend to take me." This same vision was revealed, at precisely the same moment, to the venerable mother Anna di S. Paolo, a religious of the monastry of St. Catharine, who, in a trance, exclaimed aloud: "Oh, this time indeed, my sisters, our Mary Ann of Jesus is dying!" Two religious were present at the time, who took the liberty to ask her how she could know it with such certainty? And she said, "I know it because our Holy Mother St. Catharine has come from heaven to visit Mary Ann, for the purpose of conducting her to glory, with a most resplendent crown destined for her triumph.

On the 25th of May, the day on which the church celebrated the solemnity of the glorious

Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, she gave them to understand by her gestures, that she wished to be carried to that window of her apartment which overlooked the chapel erected in the public street to our Lady of the Angels. Here, on her knees, although on account of her extreme weakness she could scarcely support herself, she heard five successive masses. After that, being carried back into her room, she asked to write, and exposed briefly in few words her three desires. The first was that she should be transferred into the room of D. Giovanna her niece. It seemed that she would thus prepare to die dispossessed of every thing, removed from her own apartment, and upon a bed the property of another: and the more that her many instruments of penance might not be seen by the people who would come to see her. She begged in the second place, that after her death an old and worn out dress might be given her as an alms to serve as her shroud; and that her body should be buried in the church of the Society of Jesus, at the foot of the altar of our Lady of Loretto, a favour she had already solicited and obtained of the Superiours of the same Society, of which she professed herself, although unworthy, an humble daughter. Finally,

she entreated her sister and niece that they would observe the greatest decency in dressing her body, and as soon as she was dead to turn her with her face towards the ground, because from her mouth a quantity of blood would flow, as in fact it happened: and she concluded by returning her most humble thanks to the household, and especially to her brother-in-law, D. Cosimo, for the good education he had given her and his kind attention to her up to that hour.

The next day she showed a desire of returning again to the window to hear the holy mass: and although the family, perhaps fearing that she would faint on account of the great prostration of her strength, hesitated for some considerable time, nevertheless, moved to pity by her urgent entreaties to be allowed her request, they were at last induced to grant it. She assisted, therefore, with much fervour at one mass, after which, not being any longer able to stand upon her feet, or to sit, she was carried back in the arms of her attendants and placed for the first time on the bed of her niece. From this they judged that her course was nearly run, and that her happy passage was near at hand. And she herself confirmed it, for hearing the bystanders speak of her death, she raised one

finger of her hand, indicating in this manner, that that was to be the last day of her life. Some one present reminded her, that it would not look well for her to die before D. Cosimo, who had always been to her in place of father, and who had been summoned in haste from the villa, whither he had gone a few days before, could return home and see her alive for the last time. To this she made a sign of assent with her head; and turning her eyes from time to time around, she seemed anxiously to inquire if her brother-in-law had yet come. He arrived at last towards night, and being very much grieved to find Mary Ann reduced to the last extremity, burst into a flood of tears. But the servant of God raised her eyes and hand towards heaven, signifying to him the consolation which she felt in the thought of being speedily united to her God: after this, in the best way she could by the help of gestures, she gave him to understand that she wished to receive his blessing. D. Cosimo at first hesitated, but afterwards, seeing the invalid persist in her entreaty, he blessed her more with tears than with words.

Then Mary Ann, as if nothing now remained for her to accomplish upon earth, re-composed herself and began her agony, accompanying with

the most lively sentiments of affection the extreme Unction, which in the mean time was administered to her. FF. Luigi Vasquex, Giovanni Pietro Severino, and Alfonso Roxas, her confessors at different times, and her spiritual director brother Ferdinando della Croce, stood round her bed: and in turn suggested to her inflamed acts of divine love, which she repeated by slowly moving her lips. She always kept the crucifix firmly claspsd in her hand and from it she never raised her eyes, except occasionally looking towards heaven with great tenderness. Whilst thus engaged, she was observed suddenly to assume a most joyful countenance, and to keep her face motionless and fixed, and her eyes rivetted on high, as if she beheld some dear object before her: after this, with the little strength that was still left her, she seemed to invite those around her to unite with her to do honour and pay their respects to the personages there present. No one, except Br. Ferdinando della Croce, could penetrate the mystery. He, with the paper in his hand which he had received three days before, knew immediately that her death was near at hand, and that Jesus and Mary were already come from heaven to conduct her innocent soul to glory. Being made aware

of the fact, they all knelt down around her bed, and one of the Fathers read the recommendation of the departing soul, according to the ritual of the church. When this was finished, Father Alfonso Roxas suggested to the dying person acts of faith, hope, and charity; after them, taking the crucifix in his hand, he gave her the five wounds to kiss, one after the other. She showed plainly, by signs, that she was perfectly conscious, and accompanied every thing with the most tender interiour affections, and as each of the wounds was presented to her, she impressed a sweet kiss with the little strength which still remained. When she came to that of the side she continued longer, shedding a flood of sweet tears: then, as if impelled by a transport of love, she placed her lips upon the crown of thorns, and bending down her head, calmly yielded up her pure spirit into the hands of her Creator. Her precious death happened on the 26th of May 1645, being then 26 years, 6 months, and 26 days old, on Friday, between the hours of nine and ten at night, as she had foretold. With respect to her features and the appearance of her person, she was of an ordinary stature, of a delicate constitution, and fair complexion. She had a large and black eye, black

eye-brows, a broad and open forehead, her cheeks were full and coloured, her nose small, as well as her mouth. Her countenance, whilst it was handsome and agreeable, so also was it modest and amiable; and she seemed to breathe an odour of purity and innocence. It was sufficient to look at her to feel sentiments and affections of devotion excited in the mind.

As soon as Mary Ann was dead Ferdinando della Croce placed himself on his knees before a little altar which had been erected in the same room, and wishing to offer up a short prayer for the repose of the soul departed, was immediately bereft of his senses, and like one in an ecstacy he continued for a full hour with his mind and heart so absorbed in God that it was useless for the others to call or even shake him to make him come to himself. At last returning to himself, he rose to his feet, and with his counte nance full of joy and serenity exclaimed—"Weep not for the death of this happy virgin, for she has gone straight to heaven without passing through purgatory, and accompanied with so many merits that she possesses many over and above what she needs, and in which we also who are destitute may participate here on earth." After saying this he kissed the hands and feet

of the deceased with great reverence; and turning to the relatives he warmly recommended to them two things: The first, that they should faithfully execute her wish of being buried in the church of the Jesuits: the second, that they should use no sign of mourning, as her soul was already glorious in heaven. But there was no need of this recommendation; for no one of the family, not even her sister D. Girolama, although she wished, could shed a single tear for the death of Mary Ann. On the contrary, on the countenances of all was a visible air of tranquillity indicative of consolation and joy, as if the most fortunate accident in the world had just befallen them.

On the same night on which she died her sister with her niece, according to the direction which they had received from Mary Ann whilst alive, clothed her virginal remains in that same habit of St. Francis, which was on the skeleton, which was kept in the centre of the room: and they were induced to do this, in order to follow the custom, which was then very common throughout all the Spanish dominions, of dressing the corpse of the dead in this manner, as also because Mary Ann, to enjoy the indulgences annexed to it, had several years before, by the

advice of her confessor, worn the scapular of St. Francis of Assisium. Besides this she had asked before her death, that her corpse might be dressed in an old worn out garment that would be given her by way of alms, they judged that they could not better comply with her wish than by taking the above dress which was old and worn out, and therefore well suited to show her extreme poverty. Five chains armed with sharp points were taken from her body, and the sixth was left, because it was so embeded in her sides that it could not be removed without tearing the flesh. The body remained flexible, the countenance florid, and emitted a most odoriferous odour which soon filled the whole house. It was placed upon a noble and rich bier, adorned with curtains of silk, trimmed with folds and fringe and list of gold, holding in her hand a palm, on her head a crown, and around her was scattered flowers of every kind, and a great abundance of lights and torches. The hall besides exhibited nothing of grief, but was gracefully adorned with hangings and cloths of variegated silks.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE UNIVERSAL COMMOTION OF THE CITY AT THE REPORT OF MARY ANN'S DEATH. A LILY MIRACULOUSLY SPRINGS FROM HER BLOOD, WHENCE SHE ACQUIRES THE TITLE OF LILY OF QUITO. GREAT CROWDS OF PEOPLE AT THE TRANSLATION OF HER BODY AND HER FUNERAL OBSEQUIES. PRODIGIES WHICH TOOK PLACE BEFORE AND AFTER IT.

At early dawn of the following day, the 27th of May, the whole city was alive and in commotion on learning the happy death of the Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus. The event spread like lightning every where, and drew not only from the houses of Quito, but from the neighbouring villages a multitude of people, who, moving in crowds through the streets, and crying out at the top of their voices—*the Saint is dead, the Saint is dead*, hurried to her late residence. To increase the common joy and add to the universal commotion, one of the most charming and consoling prodigies took place, by which Almighty God was pleased that very morning to exalt the merits and publish the sanctity of his

servant. She was accustomed during her life, more for her love of suffering than for any need she had, to have herself bled at certain fixed times, every few days, and this blood, as we said before, was collected and preserved by her Indian servant in a little hole, which she had dug on purpose for it in the garden attached to the house. The same servant Catharine, having had some business or other which took her there, saw a most beautiful lily that had sprung up from the hole; and filled with wonder she ran immediately to tell the family of it. They all hastened to the spot and observed also with their own eyes the plant which had thus unexpectedly sprung forth during the night, and had already grown several palms, and was divided into three branches, at whose tops three odoriferous lilies were in full bloom. Other persons being called to see the wonder, they wished to examine every thing minutely, and removing the stone which closed the mouth of the hole, they perceived that the plant sprung from and rose out of the midst of Mary Ann's blood, which was still uncorrupt and odoriferous. They removed it with a great deal of reverence, and to their great surprise that it had roots formed as it were of little veins and delicate fibres of

the same blood: and they placed it in the hand of one of the little statues of the most Blessed Virgin. And it was principally from this prodigy that the Blessed Mary Ann had from that time, and has still, the glorious title and appellation of the *Lily of Quito.*

Hardly were the doors of the hall thrown open, where the corpse of the Saint lay exposed, than a great crowd, which was already waiting, made a rush and thronged the apartment. All wished to see her, to touch her, to venerate her and to have something to keep as a relic. In a moment all the flowers which had been strewn over the corpse disappeared, and in a short time her upper garment was cut into a thousand little pieces and carried away. And some came already prepared with scissors and other tools to cut off not only her hāir, but a part also of her flesh, when the relatives, to moderate somewhat their indiscreet fervour, promised to divide amongst those who wished the chains taken from off her body, which they had desired to preserve exclusively for themselves. But all they could do they were never able to satisfy the desires of the petitioners—new ones were coming in at every hour. Therefore on account of the throng of persons which was still increas-

ing, and having strong apprehensions of great confusion, it was thought necessary to surround the body of the deceased with armed soldiers to protect it against the excessive and insatiate rapacity of the pious. Before this there were two things which took place, and which are not to be passed over in silence. Many of those who came, being carried away by the fervour of their devotion, could not refrain from touching and kissing the angelic face of the deceased; and at the same moment that virginal face was seen to show its disapprobation of such conduct by swelling in such a manner as to deform itself in appearance. The relatives perceived it, and quickly, suspecting the cause entreated the crowd to moderate their piety, which was not at all pleasing to Mary Ann, whose pure soul seemed still to dread the least offence that might be offered to her spotless body. All abstained for the future from touching her, and her face suddenly resumed its natural beauty. What is more, whilst they were clothing the corpse the second time in a new dress, a profuse sweat was observed to flow from all her limbs, and which besides emitted a sweet fragrance. It was carefully collected in cloths which they were afterwards able to divide in many pieces, and thus

satisfy the devotion of those who also desired something belonging to the servant of God.

There was one continued press of persons going and returning all this and the half of the following day, who could never satisfy themselves with gazing over and over again upon the remains of their sainted fellow-townswoman. Shortly after mid-day, on the 28th of May, which fell upon Sunday, notice was given by the ringing of all the bells of the city, that the body was about to be transferred to the church of the Jesuits: and at the same time Monsignor, the Bishop of Quito, the chapter and clergy of the cathedral, all the religious Orders, the judges of the Royal Audience, the magistrates of the province, the flower of the nobility, all splendidly dressed in state, and with lighted torches in their hands, spontaneously collected and came to do honour to the sacred function. The bier was carried on the shoulders of priests robed in surplice and stole; but at every little distance they gave way to others who took their places. The secular nobility and other more distinguished persons came in turn and placed their bended shoulders under the bier, from the great desire they had of supporting in some manner that sacred deposit. The Religious of the Society

of Jesus, the relatives of the deceased, the governor and a few more personages of distinction, together with a company of soldiers, under arms, surrounded the corpse. There was an immense crowd in the streets; and not only were the doors of the houses and shops filled with people, but the balconies, the windows and the very roofs were alive. All were eager to behold that angelic face, and to scatter clouds of flowers over her sacred corpse, and hence at first there was a murmur on all sides, then a commotion, and lastly a loud cry of exultation and joy burst forth as soon as the sacred remains were seen in the distance. To satisfy the wishes of the multitude, although the church of the Jesuits was quite near the residence of Mary Ann, it was necessary to make a long circuit and proceed slowly through the principal streets of the city, all lined with people who were unable to remain stationary, on account of the unusual prodigy which they had continually before them; for wherever the procession approached the air was sensibly filled with a delicious fragrance which issued from the corpse of the Saint, which, after more than thirty hours, continued not only as fresh and blooming as when alive, but diffused

an agreeable odour which inundated the soul with spiritual consolation.

The festival of our Lady of Loretto had been celebrated that day in the church of the Jesuits, and her statue was conspicuously exposed above the main altar. The vast temple was adorned all over with tapestry; the walls were covered with festoons, garlands, and rich silks, so that it seemed more like a triumphal procession than a funeral, to judge from the magnificence of the preparation and the confused murmur of the dense mass. What served to increase the tumult was, that the bier was hardly within the portals of the church before the corpse of the deceased was distinctly observed to open one of its eyes, and a few minutes later, when it reached the centre and was deposited opposite the high altar, it was again observed clearly and distinctly to open the other also, and to fix its sight upon the statue of the most Blessed Virgin. There was then a great commotion amongst the people, and a general rush was made towards the bier, every one being eager to behold the prodigy with his own eyes. And great confusion would most certainly have ensued, had not Father Alfonso Roxas, in order to calm the noise and soothe the general commotion, mounted a bench, and raising

up the head of Mary Ann, showed to the multitude the eyes wide open and full of life, and then closed them again with his own hands.

After the agitation had somewhat subsided, they began to sing the solemn office of requiem; but it was found impossible to proceed with it, on account of the continued acclamations of the people and the great press of the multitude, who, after forcing every barrier, and cutting in pieces the third dress with which the sacred remains had been covered, were prepared with instruments to cut off the fingers of the hands. The singing, therefore, having been interrupted and prayers and threats being insufficient to restrain the devotion of the populace within proper bounds, by order of Monsignor the Bishop and the dignitaries of the city, the corpse was placed in a wooden coffin and consigned to the care of the Jesuits, who buried it immediately under ground in the chapel of St. Joseph, the other grave not being yet ready, which was being prepared at the foot of the altar of the most Blessed Virgin of Loretto, as Mary Ann had arranged before her death. A month later the solemn obsequies were again renewed in the same church at the city's expense, at which a noisy concourse of persons assisted; and Father

Alfonso Roxas read a long panegyric in honour of the deceased, which was afterwards published. When the service was over and the people dispersed, Monsignor the Bishop, with the President of the Royal Audience, went to the chapel of St. Joseph, where the servant of God had been interred, and, having opened the coffin, they found the body still whole and uncorrupted. The coffin was again closed and sealed, and carried in a private procession to the chapel of our Blessed Lady of Loretto, and deposited in the new tomb. Three years later it was again opened and the body was found decomposed, as Mary Ann had desired and asked; but it emitted a delicious odour, which filled the whole church. They collected the precious bones, and with much reverence replaced them in a leaden coffin which bore the following simple inscription:

HERE LIES THE ANGELIC VIRGIN

MARY ANN OF JESUS Y PAREDES.

But the fame of her wonderful life, and the odour of her heroic virtues were not buried with her body in the earth, but remain still living in the remembrance of all in South America, and were also appreciated in other parts of the Catholic world, where many like-

nesses of the saint are to be found, taken immediately after her death and drawn to life.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ESTEEM AND THE UNIVERSAL OPINION OF SANCTITY IN WHICH THE BLESSED MARY ANN WAS HELD. AUTHENTIC TESTIMONIES OF HER CONFESSORS.

I could make a long enumeration of the testimonies of those who deposed in the different processes, to the esteem and universal opinion of sanctity in which the Blessed Mary Ann was held both before and after her death. Although she led a hidden and solitary life, nevertheless her innocence and austerity were things so out of the usual course, that they could not be kept concealed from the eyes of the public. Hence the name of saint by which she was generally called; and those titles of angelic virgin, spotless soul, pure lily, which were given her by every class of persons. Not only in the city of Quito, but also in the other provinces, and in every part of South America, she enjoyed the reputation and opinion of superior sanctity: and I find that many personages of distinguished

nobility came from distant provinces to Quito, that they might have the consolation of seeing and becoming acquainted with her.

But to prove what has been asserted, I think I cannot do better than transcribe here the attestations of her confessors, who were for many years her spiritual directors and knew her intimately. Father Luigi Vasquez, a man who was naturally extremely cautious in giving an opinion, made no difficulty to affirm, "that the sanctity of Mary Ann bore, according to his judgment, a most striking resemblance to that of St. Catharine of Sienna." Father Gio. Pietro Severino was of the same opinion. He was professor of Theology in the University of St. Gregory in Quito, and on the 27th of May, hearing the signal given by the bell that Mary Ann, who had been his penitent, was dead, he interrupted his lecture, and after pronouncing before his scholars the highest encomiums on the virtues of the deceased, concluded thus his discourse: "In my judgment the degree of sanctity of our Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus is not less than that of St. Catharine of Sienna, whom she proposed to imitate in every thing."

Father John Camaccio, when he first heard of Mary Ann's death, wrote to Captain D. Co-

simo, her brother-in-law, a letter which was afterwards cited at length in the process, and is to the following effect: "I know not whether I ought to condole or rejoice with you at the news which I have just received. I deeply feel that a person of such distinguished sanctity is no more. I console myself by the certainty which I have of the singular glory which she enjoys in heaven, and in having been also the instrument, although unworthy, which the Lord made use of to advance her to that high degree of virtue, to give a detailed account of which would require more time and more space than a letter will permit. Passing over, therefore, in silence whatever regards the exteriour appearance of Mary Ann, which was visible to every one, and confining myself to a brief sketch of her interiour, which may serve as material for the discourse which you are planning, I will say, in the first place, that our Lord raised her to the highest degree of contemplation, which consists in knowing God and his perfections without long discourses, and loving him without interruption. Her penances at the time when I directed her were certainly extraordinary, and far above what such a frail body would seem capable of enduring; and these I permitted her after much

reflection and consideration, because I was convinced that they had been inspired by Almighty God. She was in the habit of carrying upon her person, at the same time, six or seven rough chains, many times during the day disciplined herself to blood, spent many nights fastened to a cross, and many extended upon a ladder. Her fasts were without doubt extraordinary; for besides those on bread and water alone, which she frequently practised in the beginning; for the space of several years she never eat any thing except every fifteen days, and then her food consisted of a thin slice of bread which she afterwards soon threw up again. She had made a vow of chastity and virginity which she observed without a blemish, or the least thought that could tarnish it. She made also a vow of obedience to her confessor, which she kept with the greatest exactness, and another of poverty, by which she divested herself of every thing, even to the keys of her trinkets, neither giving nor receiving any thing without the permission of her confessor. She passed the greater portion of the day and night in vocal or mental prayer, in examens, spiritual reading and contemplation, giving scarcely an hour to sleep. She had such a singular purity of conscience

that it was necessary for absolution to have recourse to something of her past life, as she never brought any matter for absolution. She was extremely humble and keenly felt that others should regard her as virtuous, and to avoid observation she always sought the most retired corners of the church. She asked of our Lord that he would not conduct her by the way of favours and consolations, but rather by that of hardships and adversities, in imitation of D. Maria Vela, to whom she was very much devoted, and whose life she constantly read to copy it in herself; and she was so successful in her prayer that the tedium, the desolations and the interiour agonies which she suffered would have long before caused her death if the Lord had not, as I judge, miraculously preserved her life to increase her merit; and in her desolation what afflicted her most was the fear of giving trouble to others, or of seeming peevish in her answers. I could extend this relation much farther, but this letter will answer your purpose."

Still more diffuse is the juridical testimony, which Father Antonio Monosalvas, another of Mary Ann's confessors, gave in the first information taken in 1670. And since many of the facts which are deposed are already related in

other places, I will content myself with only adding a few things here in his own words. "The life," said he, "of the venerable Mary Ann of Jesus, was extraordinary and singular as regarded the penances, the fasts, and the mortifications which she performed. The deponent saw a hair shirt, made something like an Indian's under dress, which fitted tight to the body, and came down to the girdle, and with sleeves to the elbows, and studded over with sharp pointed steel. This hair cloth was woven of hair so rough, that the deponent attests that as soon as he saw it his flesh began to shudder. And the deponent knows these things from having been the spiritual father of the venerable servant of God for the space of six or seven years, a little more or less, at which time she communicated what he has deposed and what he will presently depose. . . . . During the whole course of her earthly career she preserved the first grace which she had received in baptism; and she never sinned mortally or committed a deliberate venial sin: and any imperfections which she perhaps had, were involuntary and without deliberation. . . . . Her chastity was angelic,—she never confessed any

thing that cast a shade of blemish against this virtue. She was naturally of a meek disposition and knew not what it was to become angry. The fervour and devotion which she had when she communicated, were so great that many times the deponent did not know her, because her face became as it were that of an angel. Whenever she fixed her eyes upon the most Blessed Sacrament, she renewed her three vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. The first years of her life she exercised herself in fervorous prayers, giving at least two hours to it every day, one in the morning and the other in the evening. Our Lord afterwards raised her to such a lofty contemplation, and so close a union with her beloved Spouse, that she never lost sight of the divine presence, and had no more need of books to find matter for contemplation; for whatever she saw or heard supplied her with abundant material for entertaining herself whole days and entire nights in praising and loving her heavenly Spouse. In contemplating the mysteries of the passion of Jesus Christ her heart melted with love; and here it was that her soul experienced the greatest consolations and delights. . . . . She was

venerated and regarded as a living saint every where in the city; and she was designated by all by no other name than that of saint; and when parents desired any great blessing for their daughters they were accustomed to say:—'May it please God that our children be like the saint,' meaning Mary Ann of Jesus."

Father Luca della Cueva, as well as Father Alfonso Roxas, left in writing the fullest testimonies of Mary Ann's virtues; the first in a manuscript which he sent from his missions among the infidels to Quito, that it might be inserted in the process; the other in a long discourse which he read when the obsequies were performed the second time. I shall say nothing of Brother Ferdinando della Croce, having already had frequent occasions to mention him in the course of this history.

CHAPTER XIX.

NUMEROUS PRODIGIES WROUGHT BY ALMIGHTY GOD THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE BLESSED MARY ANN. A FEW OF THE MOST REMARKABLE ONES ARE GIVEN. CONVERSIONS AND REFORMATION OF LIVES PRODUCED BY THE READING OF HER LIFE.

But were the testimonies of men wanting, that of the Almighty would certainly be sufficient, who, by many and stupendous miracles, manifested his approbation of the sanctity and precious death of his faithful servant. We will relate a few of them for the purpose of exciting the devotion of the faithful to implore her assistance and intercession.

And first of all, the rooms where the Blessed Mary Ann had dwelt were frequently seen at night illuminated with a bright light; and a sweet smell of lilies was perceived for several years over the whole apartment which she formerly occupied. At the report of this prodigy many persons from without obtained entrance into the building, which had been converted

into a monastery, and judges were sent to take juridical information of the fact: and all agreed that the cause was supernatural and miraculous, as not a plant or a branch of such a flower was to be found in the house. Likewise from the hole where Mary Ann's blood had been preserved for so many years, the most odoriferous lilies would frequently shoot forth, and around them other flowers of wonderful beauty, although the ground had never been cultivated, neither had any plants of the kind ever been sown in the whole garden.

The Indian, Catharine, whom we have so frequently mentioned in this history, dwelt near the residence of the servant of God. She was weighed down with years, and had almost entirely lost the sense of hearing. She attested in the process that many nights, when at her prayers, she heard a harmonious concert of angelic voices issuing from the chamber of her former mistress, and that among them she could easily distinguish that of D. Sebastiana di Casso, and high above them all that of the Blessed Mary Ann, which was heard above all the rest. And this alone cured her of her deafness.

Whilst D. Marta Rodriguez Paredes, niece of the servant of God, was spending some days at one of her villas in the country, a poor miserable woman of the place was suffering dreadfully from an acute pain in the head, which gave her no rest. Her mistress, moved to pity at the sight of the convulsions of the poor creature, to whom all human remedies were of no assistance, applied to her forehead a very small piece of the bone of the Saint, tying it up in a bandage that had also been stained with her blood; and the night being far advanced, the good Lady retired to take some repose. The young woman, although she was suffering dreadfully, did not hesitate to admit even that night a guilty man-servant with whom she had had criminal intercourse: but he had hardly entered before the two wretches saw, to their great terror, the roof of the house open, and a most beautiful young Lady, with a majestic countenance, descend from heaven, with a rod of fire in her hand, and attended by four young men with torches in their hands. The heavenly young Lady approached the place of iniquity, and looking at the guilty woman with eyes flashing fire: "*How is it possible,*" said she, "*that you could go so far in*

your impudence as to keep my relics about your person? Either remove them immediately, or if you do not I take your life with this rod of fire." Full of terror the guilty woman quickly threw the relics of Mary Ann far away from her, and at the same moment the vision disappeared. Both the guilty wretches remained for more than two hours so oppressed by terror that they had not the strength to move a single step, and all they could do was to ask by loud cries pardon of God and the assistance of men. The domestics were aroused by their cries, and from the mouth of the guilty pair learnt the fact which was confirmed by the prodigy of their having remained thus motionless for many hours: and both, after having made a good confession, asked and obtained leave to be married the very day after the apparition just mentioned.

Word was brought to D. Girolama de Paredes, sister of Mary Ann, that D. Maria di Casso, her daughter and wife of D. Alfonso Sanchez de Luna, was at a house in the country, and in great danger of her life. Although the hour was late at night, D. Girolama mounted a mule and started to visit her sick daughter, and whilst journeying on she poured forth fervent prayers

to her sainted sister to succour her daughter D. Maria. Her prayer was hardly finished before a sweet sleep overpowered D. Girolama whilst she was riding her mule, and Mary Ann appeared to her and addressed her in the words: "*Sister*," said she, "*you seek an impossibility of me, for the death of your daughter is already decreed, and it is but right;*" and the vision immediately disappeared. The good Lady then awoke, and bowing to the adorable dispensations of Almighty God, was so fully persuaded that her daughter would die, that when arrived at the villa where the sick person was, to all who endeavoured to animate her to hope that her daughter would recover, she replied that her death was certain, as Mary Ann had told her so: as in fact it turned out, for D. Maria died within a few days.

D. Girolama experienced the help of her sister more favourably inclined towards herself in many accidents, but more especially in two grievous infirmities. The first was when her breast was attacked with five cancers, all at the same time, and attended with horrible pains, which were fast hastening her to the grave. In this extremity the sick person applied to the

affected parts a cloth saturated with the blood which Mary Ann had discharged from her mouth after her death, and begged her that she would succour her as she had succoured so many other sick persons who had recourse to her intercession. The termination of D. Girolama's prayer and her instantaneous cure took place at the same precise moment. The other sickness from which she was evidently cured by the prayers of her sainted sister, was a malignant fever, on account of which she was given over by the physicians. She applied to her person one of the under-dresses belonging to her sister, and at the touch of the relic the fever suddenly abated with a notable change in the invalid for the better, and in a few days she was perfectly cured.

By the application of some relic belonging to Mary Ann, the mother of Maria Vilchez and Father Ignazio Cazeres were miraculously cured of violent fevers, as also a poor Indian, to whom Tommaso Paredes, brother of the Saint, gave a small particle of her clotted blood to drink in a glass of water.

For the cure of D. Giuseppa d'Escorza of a violent malignant fever, nothing more was re-

quired than to look at the picture of the servant of God; for no sooner was it brought into the invalid's chamber than the fever immediately diminished, and in a few days she was perfectly well.

D. Luigi Troia D. D., a canon of the cathedral and the vicar of the Bishop of Quito, was despaired of by the physicians, and after receiving the last sacraments disposed himself for death. Brother Ferdinando della Croce paid him a visit, and seeing the state of the sick person, sent for a picture of Mary Ann, and when the image was brought he exhorted the sick man to have recourse to her intercession. He did so with much confidence; and putting the picture on his head he grew considerably better at the same moment, and continued to improve till he was entirely cured, and survived many years.

In the villa d'Ybarra a poor Indian woman was suffering very much from a disease of the heart, for which there was no human remedy to be found. She applied with confidence to her breast a picture of Mary Ann, and for the rest of her life was perfectly free of that troublesome disease.

D. Francesca di Carvial suffered from tumours in the face, which, besides disfiguring her, caused her acute pains. D. Girolama de Paredes, niece of the servant of God, could find no remedy for a strange swelling of the whole right hand. Another virtuous young lady called Emmanuela Infausti, was tormented in the knee by a hard fleshy cresence, much bigger than an egg. Two Indians, one named Angiolina and the other Catharine Paredes, were unable to move an arm, the first from a violent contraction of the nerves, the other on account of an incurable tumour, according to the judgment of physicians. And finally, D. Francesco Aureliano had a sore on his back from his twelfth year, which could never be healed. All these, by merely bandaging on the parts affected some relic, either of the chains or the clothes of the saint, in a short time were free and cured of every disorder without any sign of the former disease.

D. Francesca Azevedo, seeing a little girl of six years of age horribly deformed with the scrofula in the throat, bandaged the neck of the innocent little creature with one of the ribbons that had been used to adorn the coffin

of Mary Ann, and at the end of four days the little girl was perfectly cured of the evil.

D. Emmanuele Guerrero de Salazar, nephew of the servant of God, was returning to Quito from the villa of Ybarra, and carried suspended from his neck a little picture of his aunt, painted upon a tablet, which he had copied himself, because, as the picture resembled her very much, many desired to have copies taken from it. Guerrero was travelling along in company with Captain Diego Migno, and one of his attendants; and all three were discoursing on the road of the virtues of Mary Ann, and of the wonders performed by Almighty God through her intercession. Meanwhile D. Emmanuele being come to a torrent, in the attempt to cross it, his beast made an unfortunate slip and pitched him head-foremost into the water, and, to add to his misfortune, the animal fell upon him with the whole weight of its body. His companions could render him no assistance, for, besides the danger of falling themselves if they approached the current, the place was so filled with rocks that there was no possibility of dismounting from their saddles. In this imminent danger no other resource was

left him than to invoke the aid of his aunt, who was not deaf to his supplication. It was perhaps half an hour that D. Emmanuele remained with his head under water, and with the weight of the beast upon him, which was crushing him, when good luck would have it, some Indians passed by and extracted Guerrero from under the mule, and afterwards lifted him up from out of the water, not dead, as might have reasonably been expected, but sound and not in the least hurt, and with Mary Ann's picture besides unsoiled and untouched. After thanking his kind preserver with all the affection of his heart, as may easily be imagined, they all three resumed their journey and arrived at the country called Guaygliabamba, where they halted to pass the night. Whether it was fright on account of the danger he had just escaped, or originated from some other cause Guerrero was attacked that same night with a violent dysentery, of which he thought he would have died: imploring however a second time the intercession of his aunt, he found himself suddenly rid of his complaint and able to continue his journey the next morning to Quito.

D. Marta Rodriguez de Paredes being one

day in the sugar-house belonging to her parents, the hour being about noon, when the sun was shining and the heavens perfectly clear, saw that the kitchen of the house was on fire, in which a Moorish slave was sleeping. Knowing the danger of a conflagration, which would be increased by the blowing of the wind, D. Marta and D. Alfonso, her brother, ran to give assistance and prevent the fire from spreading; but they soon saw that all human means would be ineffectual to check it, and that without doubt it would extend to the house and the adjoining building, and after that reach and destroy the crop of sugar cane, to the serious loss of its owners. In this perplexity D. Marta remembered that she had in her room where she slept a picture of Mary Ann, and going after it immediately she brought it into the yard of the house, and with great confidence pressing the image in her arms: "*Aunt*," said she, "*how can you allow this little country house of ours to be burnt up?*" and after she had said this she approached the flames and held the picture before them. Something like little drops of sweat were observed on the face of the picture, occasioned by its being brought in close contact with the

raging element; and after this the sky which had been perfectly clear became suddenly darkened, and such a violent rain fell that the fire was totally extinguished, the Moor saved, all the furniture of the house unharmed, and only the kitchen, where the fire originated, was partly destroyed without any other damages, which at one time seemed imminent.

Diego Calahorrano, when crossing the Latacunga, a rapid and deep river, was carried away by the current, and was in imminent danger of being drowned. He had recourse in his danger to the servant of God, a small particle of whose dress he carried about with him as a relic, and without knowing how, he found himself on the bank of the river, rescued from the water and consequently from death.

D. Basilia Olmos was very much troubled with a growing tumour in her left breast, and which was pronounced incurable by human art. A few of the hairs of Mary Ann were given to D. Basilia as a relic, that she might apply them to the part affected; but she in place of using them for the purpose for which they were given her, put them away in a casket. For three successive nights she heard a voice in her sleep

that invited her to apply the aforesaid relic, but thinking it was wrong to give any credence to dreams, she did not obey. One day whilst making her confession to Monsignor Salvatore Bermudez, Bishop of La Pace, and Archbishop elect of La Plata, the prelate spoke to her of her sufferings, and advised her to recommend herself with confidence to the servant of God, to promise an alms in her name, and lastly to apply to the affected part a relic of her. D. Basilia was surprised to hear the prelate speak in this manner, and frankly told him of the voice she had heard for three successive nights; then without further hesitation, as soon as she was returned home, she placed the Saint's hair upon the tumour, and in an instant, at the very touch, the evil disappeared and she was perfectly cured. The prodigy was known all over the city, and several persons wishing that she should testify, under oath, to the fact in the juridical process, the Lady made much difficulty about taking the requisite oath. The day at length appointed for taking authentic information of the prodigy that had happened to her arrived, and therefore becoming more timorous than ever, she absolutely refused to give her evidence. This re-

fusal was certainly very untimely, and God, who wished his servant glorified, caused a sharp pain to strike D. Basilia in the left breast, by which being overcome she began, of her own accord, to cry out that she would take the oath without further difficulty; and then the pain, which was only sent her again for this end, instantaneously disappeared, and she never after felt the least symptom of it.

It would really be an endless task to gather together, without omitting one, all the prodigies operated either by touching the relics or the pictures of Mary Ann of Jesus, by the invocation of her name or by simply promising to concur in some manner to promote her honour. A great many of these miraculous events may be read duly authenticated in the different processes; and in an especial manner she has shown herself in AMERICA the particular patroness of woman in labour, many of whom she has rescued in a most singular manner from imminent danger of perishing, together with their offspring.

Finally, the reading of Mary Ann's life alone was the cause of the conversion of many obstinate sinners, and an improvement in the lives of others. Not to tire the reader's patience, I

will only relate here one single instance. There lived in the city of Quaiaquil, in South America, a young lady descended of a noble family, whose name was Catharine. Her manners were in other respects innocent, but very gay and very sprightly; and perhaps in danger of falling and losing herself on account of her excessive indulgence in setting off her person and in vain ornaments, which foolishly occupied her the best portion of the day. On one occasion being on a visit with her mother to the house of some relatives, she heard the company speak of the wonderful virtues of Mary Ann, and above all, of the extraordinary effects which an attentive reading of her life produced in every class of persons. These things appeared to the young lady mere exaggerations of minds inclined to be too credulous; and with an air of contempt she said she would like to read Mary Ann's life to see if it would operate those great wonders in her, which they reported at so cheap a rate. She began, therefore, from mere curiosity, to run over with her eyes the history of her life that had fallen into her hands; and after reading over a good portion she went on boasting that she felt no change in herself for the better.

and laughed at the credulity of others. She came at last to that chapter where it is related how the servant of God, a little child of seven years, when in the country, was found on her knees in the woods, scourging her innocent body at the same time with a bundle of thorny herbs: and here it was that God had resolved to convince and convert her; for Catharine, at the recital of this, entered into herself, and comparing her vanity and delicacy with the penance and austerity of that little innocent child, broke forth into a flood of bitter tears for her past folly; after this, stripping herself of every vain ornament, she laid aside her rich and showy clothes which she had on, and to the great wonder of the whole city, appeared in the humble dress of the third Order of St. Dominic. Not even satisfied with this, she entreated her relatives, and succeeded at last in being brought to Quito, where, in the monastery of St. Catharine of Sienna, she took the religious habit, and corresponding to the prodigy operated in her by reading the life of Mary Ann of Jesus, she lived and died in the odour of no ordinary virtue.

And this is precisely the fruit which, with the help of God and the intercession of the

Blessed Mary Ann. I promise myself from my slender exertions. I shall look upon myself as well repaid if this history edify and becomes the means of salvation to many, who come with minds well disposed to peruse it.

CHAPTER XX.

TWO MIRACLES APPROVED OF BY THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES BEFORE THE BEATIFICATION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD.

Angela Polido Escorza, a noble matron of the city of Quito, was in November of 1760 suddenly assailed with acute pains in her bowels: after this her stomach began to swell in a strange manner. Her physicians at first pronounced it an effect of pregnancy, but after nine months and more had passed, and the swelling still increasing with the pains, they suspected that it was some very serious internal disease. Nor was it long before it began to manifest itself with dangerous and mortal symptoms, such as frequent discharges of blood, palpitation of the heart, nervousness, acute pains and spasms.

difficulty in breathing, and continual danger of suffocation The invalid found no rest by day or night, and she was unable to move herself without the greatest pain and difficulty. She continued in this state for twenty-two months, and having now been given over by her physicians, and from prostration of strength reduced to the last extremity, she ordered every description of medicine to be removed from her room, and sent for Father Domenico Coleti, of the Society of Jesus, to whom she wished to make her general confession, and so prepare herself for death. A short time after she received the holy viaticum and extreme unction with sentiments of much devotion. Whilst they were reciting the last prayers for the recommendation of the departing soul, raising her eyes she saw an image of the venerable Mary Ann, which was suspended on the wall opposite to her bed, and at the same time she felt a rising in her heart of a firm confidence of obtaining a cure through the intercession of the servant of God, for whose sake she had already promised to give five piasters of silver. She sent to get a small particle of her bone, which she kept as a relic, and dividing it into two parts: "*O most glorious*

Saint," said she, "*and my fellow-countrywoman, born in Quito like myself, ah, why do you permit me to suffer such pains without the least relief? I promise you, in case I am cured, to make a novena, and to pay the five piasters which I have promised.*" Having said this, she swallowed a piece of the bone, and with the other made the sign of the cross over her stomach. At this moment D. Giuseppa Castello entered the room, and fixing her eyes upon the invalid, in her astonishment she cried aloud: "*O, my Angiola, what has become of your disease?*" At these words the invalid, as if coming to herself, ran her hand over her stomach, which she found in its natural state. The pains were all gone, all bad symptoms had disappeared, and sound and vigorous she rose and sat up in her bed; then hastily dressing herself she ran below to call the servant-maids, who were lamenting in their own apartment the approaching death of their mistress; she assembled her friends and neighbours, and with great jubilee related to them her miraculous cure. The whole city was full of it, and they gave public thanks to Almighty God, amidst a great concourse of people.

D. Angiola enjoyed perfect health for the

next twelve years; but in 1771 she was tried by Almighty God with a new and dangerous sickness. She felt a great swelling in her womb, which in a short time became so big that she was scarcely able to move. D. Giuseppe Rosario, a celebrated physician, was called in haste, who, after making his observations, pronounced the origin of the disease to be two internal scirrhus—substances of extraordinary size, which were incurable, on account of the difficulty of applying suitable remedies. The pious lady wished to receive the last sacraments and make her confession to D. Giovanni Ignazio de Aquilar, the parish priest, who exhorted her to have recourse to the venerable Mary Ann, and ask of her the grace of a second cure. The lady followed his advice; and all that day, which was the 10th of February 1772, she held an image of the saint pressed to her bosom. The next day she wished to go to the church, to receive holy communion, and was little less than carried thither loaded with pains. She had scarcely received the body of our Lord, when she heard an interiour voice, which said to her that *the grace desired had been granted her.* And so in fact it was; for,

getting upon her feet, she quickly descended the steps of the altar by herself, and having come to the centre of the church she cried out in a loud voice, "*A miracle.*" She heard mass, kneeling, and returned home attended by a great crowd, perfectly cured. Of these two miracles there can be no doubt, on account of the nature of the diseases, as well as on account of the multitude of witnesses, and above all on account of the decree of the Sovereign Pontiff, by which both of them have been approved.

CHAPTER XXI.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CAUSE INTO THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES. ITS PROGRESS AND TERMINATION.

On account of the numerous prodigies which Almighty God wrought in every part of South America at the intercession of the venerable Mary Ann of Jesus, the citizens of Quito, and especially the relatives of the servant of God, made humble supplication to Monsignor the

Bishop, that he would by authority take juridical testimony in regard to her life, virtues, and miracles. The first initiatory steps, therefore, were commenced in 1670 by Monsignor Alfonso della Pegna, and in the course of eight years a great number of witnesses, most of them ocular, were examined in due form and with much care. D. Giovanni Guerrero di Salazar, nephew of Mary Ann, was to have carried the authenticated copy to Rome; but the ship in which he sailed was overtaken by a furious tempest near the port of Havana and wrecked, and all was lost except the passengers. A second expedition undertaken in 1706 succeeded no better; for the ship which carried the acts fell into the power of the enemies of Spain, who pillaged these seas. The citizens of Quito did not however desist from promoting the cause of the beatification of their fellow-townswoman, and in 1751 they despatched a third copy of the process, which in 1754 finally reached Rome. The validity of it having been discussed and approved of, the formal introduction of the cause was proposed in the Sacred Congregation of Rites, which was admitted and signed on the 17th of De-

cember, 1757, by the Sovereign Pontiff, Benedict XIV.

The next year letters in due form were expedited to the Bishop of Quito to begin the process or examination, authorized by the Pope, with regard to the general estimation in which she was held: and at the same time other letters of the same kind for the formation of the process, with respect to her virtues and miracles in particular, taking the testimony of those who, from their advanced age, were likely to die soon. All these processes being come to Rome, and with them the canon D. Giovanni del Castillo, sent expressly by the city of Quito to solicit and promote the cause, the question of her virtues was proposed in three distinct Congregations, and at last the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VI., solemnly approved and declared them heroic.

Owing to the vicissitudes of the times which occurred under the two Pontiffs, Pius VI. and VII., the cause proceeded no further, and only in these last years it was resumed by the care of the Reverend Father John Roothaan, General of the Society of Jesus, to whom its promotion was confided by the Bishop and the city of Quito. And it was but just that the Society

should take an interest in promoting the glory of one who had been as it were intimately connected with it.

Two miracles were then proposed to be discussed, and after having been thoroughly sifted in all due forms, in three Congregations, his Holiness, Pope Pius IX., approved them on the 11th of January, 1847, and on the 29th of September, 1850, declared that they might safely proceed to the solemn beatification, which afterwards took place in the Vatican Basilic, on the 10th day of November of the year 1853, in presence of their Eminences the Cardinals belonging to the sacred Congregation of Rites, the Consultors of the same, the Chapter, and Vatican Seminary. Reverend Father Peter Beckx, General of the Society of Jesus, presented himself before his Eminence Cardinal Patrizi, begging him that he would deign to order the publication of the Apostolic Brief, this favour being granted and the Brief read, the image of the beatified was immediately uncovered, amid the festive sounds of the sacred bells and the discharge of artillery and after singing the Ambrosian Hymn, a solemn pontifical mass, with splendid music,

was intoned by Monsignor Bighi, Archbishop of Filippi, and Vicar of the Vatican Chapter. At half-past three in the afternoon his Holiness descended from his Vatican residence to the august Basilic, accompanied by the sacred College and his noble court, to venerate the newly beatified saint.

The solemn beatification of the Blessed Mary Ann of Jesus would have taken place much sooner, if the disturbances occasioned by internal dissensions and party strifes in Quito had not prevented it. Let us hope nevertheless, that the newly beatified saint will look down from heaven with a propitious eye upon her country, restore peace and tranquility to it, and above all preserve it from the assaults and snares of the enemies of Religion and the Catholic Church.

DEO GRATIAS ET MARIÆ ET MARIANNÆ.

INSCRIPTIONS

Affixed in the Vatican Basilic at the solemn Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God.

I.

MARIANNAE. DE. PAREDES. ET. FLOREI. VIRGINI.
QVAE. ET. QVITI. LILIVNI. DICTA. EST.
PIVS. PAPA. IX. PONT. MAX.
MINORES. CAELITVM. HONORES.
XII. KAL. DEC. ANN. REP. SAL. MDCCCLIII.
DECERNIT.

II.

JOANNAM. SANCVERA.
SACERDOTI. OPERANTI. ADSTANTEM.
MARITVS. POGIONE. DISTRICTO.
IN. TEMPLVM. INVADIT.
CONFVGIT. JOANNA. IN. SINVM.

B. MARIANNÆ. ILLIC. ADORANTIS.
QVÆ. IRAM. FORENTIS. MARITI. FRANGIT
AGNOQVE. MANSVETIOREM. REDDIT.

III.

ERO. QVASI. ROS. ISRAEL.
GERMINABIT. SICVT. LILIVM.
ET. ERVMPET. RADIX. EJOS. VT. LIBANI.
LAETABITVR. DESERTA. ET. INVIA.
ET. EXVLTABIT. SOLITVDO.
ET. FLOREBIT. QVASI. LIBIVM.

IV

ANGELAM. POLIDO. A. DVPLICI. LETHALI. MORBO.
EX. IMPROVISO. INCOLVMEM.
IOSEPHVS. CASTELLO. MIRATOR.
PRODIGIQVE. AVCTOREM. QVÆERIT.
B. MARIANNAE. IMAGINEM. ET. OS.
CVJVS. PARTEM. DEGLVTIERAT.
ANGELA. OSTENDIT.

V.

POST. ANNOS. XII. EADEM. ANGELA.
DVPLICI. SCIRRHOMATE. AD. MORTEM.
CERTO. TRAHITVR.
B. MARIANNAM. ANGELA. ADVOCAT.
SESEQVE. AD. TEMPLVM. DEFERRI. IVBET.
CAELESTI. PASCITVR. CONVIVIO.
EX. IMPROVISO. ITERVM.
INCOLVMITATEM. RECVPERAT.

THE END.

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